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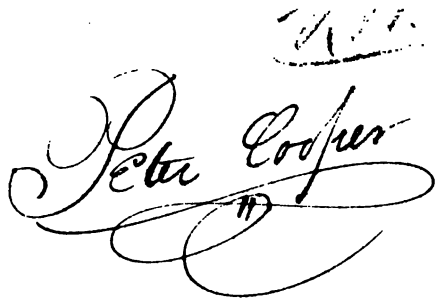
Peter Cooper

AN

# EXPOSITION AND DEFENCE

OF

# UNIVERSALISM,

IN A SERIES OF SERMONS

DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD.

BY REV. J. D. WILLIAMSON.

ASTOR LIBRARY NEW YORK

NEW YORK.
P. PRICE, 130 FULTON-STREET.
Between Nassau-street and Broadway:

1840.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1840, by
P. PRICE.
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# PREFACE.

THE circumstances which drew out the following discourses, are rather local, than general. The author is the only public advocate of a world's salvation, in a city of one hundred thousand souls. His sentiments are frequently attacked, and as often misrepresented, both in the pulpit and from the press. For this cause he felt himself called upon to lay before his congregation, and the public, so far as they were willing to hear, a plain and explicit statement of his faith, and the reasons on which that faith was founded. He had no intention of giving these labors to the public through the press, but prepared them for the pulpit alone. He commenced their delivery; and it was soon discovered, that they attracted more attention than his most sanguine anticipations had led him to expect. The large house in which they were delivered became crowded to overflowing, and a general desire was expressed that they might be issued from the press. In accordance with this desire and the advice of friends, the author has consented to present them to the public in their present form, with scarcely a revision from the original copy.

He is aware that there are already many able works *upon the same subject* before the public, in comparison

with which, any effort of his pen must be feeble. But it is hoped, that the attention which has been given these lectures, in that portion of the Master's vineyard where the author resides, will secure for them there, a more general circulation than could be obtained for any other work upon the same subject. It is hoped, also, that they may be the means of adding something to the general good, by strengthening the faith of the believers who are scattered abroad, and presenting to the minds of those "who are of the contrary part," a feeble effort to explain and establish the doctrines of those who rejoice in the great salvation.

For the style and manner of his sermons, he makes no apology, his aim has been to be understood, and to convince, rather than please the ear with well sounded periods or flights of fancy; and as for his errors, if he has advanced any, let the reader and the public give them no quarters. "If this work be of man, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." "Whosoever readeth let him understand," and if the doctrines here taught shall be proved false, none will be more ready to abandon them than the public's

humble servant

THE AUTHOR.

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AN

# EXPOSITION AND DEFENCE

OF

# UNIVERSALISM.

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## SERMON I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

"May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean." Acts xvii. 19, 20.

The hearer will undoubtedly recognise this, as the language of certain philosophers of Athens, addressed to the Apostle Paul. At Thessalonica, the Jews raised a tumult and drove him out of the city. Departing thence, he went to Berea, and there preached the good word of the kingdom, with great success. Thither, however, the Jews followed him, and, "stirred up the people against him," until he was no longer safe in that city. Accordingly, he departed, and went to Athens, and there waited for his companions, Silas and Timotheus to join him. He was now in the midst of the most opulent and powerful city of Greece—a city, distinguished alike for the military talents, learning and eloquence of its inhabitants. *There*, the schools, professors and philosophers of Greece, were congregated,

and there, temples and altars were reared to every false God of whose name the people had heard. The historian informs us, that "Paul's spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the whole city given to idolatry, therefore, disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with devout persons, and in the market, daily, with such as met him." In these disputations, he encountered certain of the Epicureans and Stoics, and they brought him to Areopagus, the place where they held their courts of justice, and there, they addressed him in the language of the text. "May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean; for they spent their time in nothing else, but to tell, or to hear some new thing."

I cannot forbear the remark here, that although these inquirers were actuated by nothing better than an idle curiosity, in making this request, yet their conduct was far more commendable, than that of those who condemn a man and his religion, without first giving him a hearing in his own behalf. Paul gladly embraced the opportunity thus afforded him of entering upon a defence of the gospel. He preached to them, "God that made the world, and all that dwell therein," pointed out to them the folly of their idolatrous practices, and appealed to them in behalf of Jesus and the resurrection, with such energy and power, that "some believed," and others said, "we will hear thee again of this matter."

I presume the hearer has already anticipated the use the speaker intends to make of this text. He stands before you, the advocate and the *only public advocate* in this large city, and even in this State, of the doctrine *of impartial* and efficient grace—a doctrine, which to *some of his* hearers, may be both new and strange. He

doubts not, that some of his auditors have turned in hither, and he trusts with good motives, for the purpose of learning what this new doctrine is; and they would gladly know what these things mean. The speaker has no sentiments to conceal, and if his hearers will manifest a good share of that patience which characterized the man of Uz, he will proceed in all frankness and simplicity to lay before them his views of the economy of his father's grace. He asks, and he feels confident that he will receive from this enlightened and respectable audience, a candid and patient hearing, and if in the end, he fails of producing conviction that his sentiments are true, the hearer shall, at least, have it in his power to give a more enlightened judgement against them. He speaks for himself only, and is alone responsible for what he utters; at the same time, the hearer is at liberty to conclude that in these views, he *mainly* agrees with the great body of the denomination to which he is attached. These preliminaries being settled, we come now to lay before you the most prominent features of our faith. These are

I. The existence of one only living and true God.

This supreme object of our devotions, we believe, to be possessed of every possibly great and glorious attribute and perfection, that can command our love or invite our praise. In him is *Power*, which knows no control—*Wisdom*, which never errs, but sees with infallible exactness, "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the thing that is not yet done"—*Mercy*, which melts in pity o'er the woes of man—*Truth*, which cannot lie—*Holiness*, without spot or blemish—*Goodness*, unchanging as God and impartial as the light of heaven, and *Justice*, which rewards the virtuous and punishes *the vicious, according to* those eternal principles of rec-

titude and equity, which are the same yesterday, to-da and for ever. This is, with us, the foundation of a religious truth, the sure and steadfast corner-stone, on which the whole superstructure of the christian temp rests. The evidences of the existence of such a Go meet us on every page of nature's ample volume, ev open before us. We read his name, stamped with th broad and legible impress of his own hand, on all th surrounding glories of creation. We discover the wo ders of his Power, in this "ponderous globe of eart self balanced on her centre hung," and in the dista stars, that wheel their endless circles in awful majes through the infinity of space above and around us. W trace the footsteps of his Wisdom, in the wonderf order and harmony that pervade all the operations nature's vast, and complicated machinery. We see h Goodness, in every "changing season, as it rolls;" an the teeming earth and bending heavens around us be their testimony to his love. We mark the rules of h Justice, in the infallible certainty with which punis ment, sooner or later, overtakes the guilty, and in th rich and sweet reward, that comes down upon the virt ous and the obedient. Thus we learn that there is God, and we count it no credulity, to say, and to believ in all its length and breadth, that the stupendous fabr of the universe was reared by the hand of a wise an powerful God; and we discover, neither reason, philos phy nor truth, in the mind of that misguided man, wh hath "said in his heart, that there is no God." We a content to say, in the language of the sacred penma "Lo! God hath made us, and not we ourselves:" an we rejoice to know, that in him power never degenerat *into tyranny*, wisdom into cunning, mercy into wea *ness, nor justice* into cruelty, but all blend, centre

monize in changeless and immortal goodness. We ieve that this God has established a moral govern- nt in the world—that he takes cognizance of human duct, rewards the virtuous and punishes the vicious hat he has made a revelation of himself and his rernment to man—and that he has so arranged the er of his providence, that all

> " Conspires to his supreme control
> To universal good."

must not here omit to remark, that the Lord our d, is one. Sole and supreme author, and governor of things, he has no *equal* to dispute his sway, no *rivals* claim a portion of the homage due to him alone. We acknowledge no other being as God, but him alone. nce with the sentiments of the Polytheist who be- ves in many gods, the Pantheist who believes that is god, and the Trinitarian, who believes in three ds in one, and one in three—we have no fellowship communion. To us there is ONE GOD, the Father of , and besides him there is none else. Thus the Scrip- es teach and thus does reason decide. The heathen leed, had a multitude of gods, but the Apostles and ophets abjured the whole long catalogue of Pagan inities, and worshipped with singleness of heart, the e and indivisible I AM; and it would in our judgement as easy to prove, that these Patriarchs worship- d thirty thousand gods with the Romans, as that ey acknowledged three beings of equal power and ory.

The doctrine of the simple and undivided unity of d, is no *new* or *strange* thing under the sun. It is as l as that Gospel whose author bowed at the throne his Father in prayer, thereby acknowledging him as

supreme, and whose tongue confessed, saying, "My Father is greater than all." It is as old as the law, which was given in the midst of the thunders of mount Sinai; for there, God proclaimed his name as the one only living and true God. It is as old as Abraham, for to him, God said, "I am God and there is none else." It is as old as Adam, for to him God manifested himself as the one supreme. It is as old, yea older, than creation, for ere the morning stars sang together, or even the spirit of the Almighty walked forth upon the dark waters to rouse this universe into being, *even then*, God undivided and alone, dwelt in the changeless eternity of his own presence, and angels and archangels bowed in ceaseless wonder before him, and worshipped him, as the sole and only object of adoration and praise. It ought not therefore, to be considered as something new or strange, that we should worship one God, and one alone.

But I pass this, for my object, in this discourse, is not so much to prove the truth of our faith, as to tell you what that faith is. The proof is reserved for our future labors.

II. Our faith recognises, Jesus Christ as the son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

You will, of course, have concluded from the remarks already made, that however highly we may esteem the character of Jesus, we cannot recognise him as the self existent and supreme God. He himself claimed no such exaltation, but uniformly acknowledged the supremacy of God, not only in words, but in the fact that he worshipped him, and prayed to him, as a superior being.

He confessed, that he was *sent* of God, and he claimed *no power that* he did not receive from God. "I can of *my own self do* nothing," was his constant assertion.

He claimed no higher title than the humble one, "the son of man," and if he claimed no more for himself, it is a misguided disciple that claims it for him. Instead therefore, of "giving the glory of God to another," we maintain, that Jesus of Nazareth was a created, and a dependent being, deriving all his wonderful powers from God. We are content to view him as did Peter, when he said, "he was a man approved of God, by signs and miracles, and wonders which God did by him, in the midst of the people;" or Paul, when he said, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the *man Christ Jesus*, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And if you ask me if he was *no more* than a man? My answer is, in the language of scripture, "He was made in *all things*, like unto the brethren," but was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," and endued with power greater than any other man. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Upon the nature of Christ's mission and work on earth, it is proper, that I should speak at some length, under this head. Jesus came *not* to placate the wrath of incensed and outraged Omnipotence. The heathens worshipped gods whose favor must be propitiated and whose wrath must be appeased by sacrifices and blood. But the radiant bow of heaven's immortal Lord and King, was never yet shrouded in a cloud so dark, that his own mercy and love, could not shine with brightness upon the world. The mission of Christ, is not presented in the scriptures, as having originated in, or as having been rendered necessary on account of the wrath of God. *On the contrary, it is* uniformly set forth as originating

in God, and as being the highest testimony of his *love.* "God *so loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten son." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to die for us." These are the teachings of the scriptures, and they certainly forbid the idea that it was any part of the object of a Saviour's mission, to save men from the unmerciful wrath of God. Neither did Jesus come to save from the just *punishment of sin,* by satisfying the divine justice, and suffering the penalty due the sinner in his room and stead. This is evident from the fact, that God himself has declared the principle of condemning the just, and justifying the wicked, to be an abomination in his sight; and of course, he could not do the abominable thing. It is evident also, from the consideration, that justice cannot be satisfied with the sufferings of the *innocent.* When a law is transgressed, it is out upon the transgressor, and ten thousand rivers of innocent blood, can never satisfy the claims of that law. It asks the blood of the guilty, and of the *guilty alone,* and it is foul disgrace to the law of God, to represent it, as a blind Juggernaut, thirsting for blood, and equally well pleased whether that blood flows from the veins of the guilty, or gushes from the heart of the innocent, so that the required quantum of blood is shed. One of the clearest principles of justice, is that which forbids the infliction of the punishment of the guilty upon the head of the innocent, and there is no justice in Heaven, or earth, that can be satisfied by the sufferings of the innocent for the guilty.

The position assumed, is further evinced in the fact, that God has said, "Every man shall suffer for his *own sins,*" and *has* and *does still* practice, upon the principle *of punishing* the guilty, which he would have no right *to do, if justice had* lost its claims, in consequence of

having been fully satisfied by the death and sufferings of Christ.

I may at some future time take this matter up, at large. At present I merely hint at it, in order to lead your minds to a just view of another prominent and *peculiar* principle of our faith which teaches, that "God will by no means clear the guilty," but will inflict upon *every soul* of man, the just punishment of his sins, and there is no escape. Thus saith the scriptures, "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished."

Now, it is a remarkable fact, that while the ceaseless cry is raised against us, that we deny all punishment for sin, we are the *only denomination* who believe that *all sin* will be punished. I know others believe, that *some* sinners will be fully punished, but they also believe, that *many* will escape the penalty of the law. They do indeed tell us, that all men deserve an endless hell, and would receive it, if justice were done; but they have all some spiritual insolvent act in the shape of an atonement, or forgiveness, or repentance, by which the vilest sinner may escape, and cheat justice of its dues. Set it down, as one of the *peculiar* doctrines of Universalism, that no man can, by any possibility, escape a just punishment for his sins. We believe in the forgiveness or removal of *sin*, *not* in the remission of *punishment*, and neither forgiveness, nor atonement, nor repentance, nor any thing else, can step in between the sinner and the penalty of the violated law.

The dogma of endless wo, we reject as unmerciful, unjust and cruel, a penalty which a just God never did *and never can annex to his law.* It was not therefore

necessary for Christ to come into the world to save men from a future endless hell, as a penalty of the divine law, for the good and sufficient reason, that no such penalty was ever annexed to that law. I am not speaking at random, but I know whereof I affirm, when I say that no living man can take up the Bible, and find a place where God gave man a law and annexed to it the penalty of endless misery. Hence, I say, that man needed not to be saved from such an evil, for the best of all possible reasons, that in the economy of God, he never was exposed to any such calamity.

I have now told you, what Christ did not come for; will you hear from the blessed Saviour himself, what was the object of his mission on earth? He says, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the earth, that I might bear witness to the truth." Now the witness does not go into court to make truth. He goes there, to testify to what is already true. So Jesus in our view, came not to make any thing true, that was not so before; but he was the faithful and true witness, who came to make known the truth, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end."

He came to reveal the character and the purpose of God, and hence, near the close of his ministry he said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, I have declared thy name unto them which thou gavest me out of the world."

The fact was, that man was ignorant without hope and without God in the world. He was ignorant of himself, of his own nature and destiny, ignorant of God, and his purposes of grace, and devoid of confidence in the care and protection of his heavenly father. He *bowed before* stocks and stones, and said "these be my *gods.*" *He tore* his flesh—he tortured his body—he

cast himself in the flood—he devoted himself to a living martyrdom, and burned the bodies of his children in the flame, to appease the wrath and secure the favor of his gods, and was well pleased, if by these rites he secured a trembling hope of safety for a day or an hour.

The grave yawned at his feet and there was no light to shine upon its darkness. Man shuddered as he thought that he must go down to feed the worm, and sleep in eternal silence in the tomb—or if perchance, the spirit survived the shock of death, there was danger that he would be the companion of demons and the sport of fiends through a long eternity. Jesus came a light into the world. He tore away the vail which had so long obscured the face of the excellent glory, and revealed to a wondering world the character of God, in all its matchless beauty, as the *friend* and *father*, who fed the fowls of the air—decked the lillies of the field, and watched the falling sparrow, and who would more abundantly take care of man, the last and noblest work of his hand. He also brought life and immortality to light, and bore his testimony to the resurrection of the dead; and to prove that his witness was true, descended into the grave—rose from its power, and ascended on high, to receive gifts for men, "yea for the rebellious also that the Lord God might dwell among us." Thus, he bore witness to the truth, and labored to save man from ignorance, from sin, from doubt and fear, and from *death itself* by the power of the resurrection. To this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, "that he might bear witness to the truth;" and because this truth is destined to prevail over all opposition, and save man universally, in prospect and fruition, therefore, is he, what we believe him to be, "the Saviour of the world." This brings me to say, that we believe,

III. In the resurrection of all men from the dead, and in the ultimate holiness and happiness of the whole human family.

This is, with us, the crowning excellency of the Gospel—a theme on which we ever dwell, with most lively satisfaction and joy. To this grand consummation of the divine government, all the attributes and perfections of God, and all the principles of the divine government are tending; and the sentiment thus shadowed forth in these, is repeated in clearer and more emphatic tones in the revelation which God has made.

The difference between us and other denominations, in regard to the resurrection of the dead is simply this. Others believe that men will be raised from the dead morally in the same state, or condition, in which they left this world. Thus, if a man dies a sinner, they believe that he will be raised up from the dead a sinner, with all his evil propensities and passions about him, and he will then receive the reward of his doings. To him the resurrection will be an endless and bitter curse, inasmuch as it will introduce him to a state of untold and immortal suffering. *Our views* of the resurrection of the dead differ from this. We think that God has a higher, holier and better object in view, in the resurrection, than that of conferring an immortality upon sin and suffering. We believe that the lusts of the flesh, and all the evil passions that distract and torment man on earth, will be left *in the earth* where they originated, that God will not transplant them to another world to nourish them there. We believe that man shall be raised from the dead, as the apostle said he should be, "immortal," "incorruptible," "glorious," and "heavenly," and in the "image" of the risen Redeemer—that he *shall be, as the* Saviour said he should be, in the resurrec-

tion, "equal unto the angels," neither shall he die any more, but be a child of God, as he is a child of the resurrection, and that the future life, shall be to all, a ceaseless blessing, coming from the fullness of a father's grace. There, sin shall be finished and transgression shall end—*there*, no storms of passion shall rise, no wave of sorrow disturb the waters of that peaceful river, which flows pure as amber, and clear as crystal, from the throne of God on high. The hand of a father's love shall wipe the last tear from the eye of weeping humanity, and his soothing voice hush to silence the *last* sigh that shall escape from the pained heart of a creature of God. *There*, all shall be *holy*, and happy because they are holy; and there shall be no note of discord to mar the harmony of creation's jubilee. Such is the consummation of the government of God as we behold it. I ask you to compare these views of God and his government, with a system which conducts us on to the future world, and thus leaves us with a fragment saved while countless millions mourn—*a system* which makes the universe itself a huge reservoir of tears, a theatre of endless rebellion, cursing and blasphemy—and when you have made the comparison, tell me in the name of reason, which is most worthy of a God of infinite goodness.

I have now given you an outline of a doctrine, which to some of you may be new; but new or old, so we believe, and so we preach. I have only to add, that this doctrine is in reality nothing new under the sun. God himself proclaimed it unto Abraham saying, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Paul says expressly, that himself, and his faithful coadjutors in the ministry, labored and suffered reproach, because they trusted in the *living God who was* "*the* Saviour of all men, especi-

ally of them that believed," and Peter affirms, that the "restitution of all things" had been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, since the world began. Not one had failed of bearing testimony to this truth.

Among the apostolic fathers, John the bishop of Jerusalem, Gregory Naziazen, Clement of Alexandria, and the far famed Origen, were the open and avowed advocates of this doctrine. In fact, it was proclaimed with all boldness in the christian church, during the first three hundred years of its existence, and it was never found out to be a heresy, until about the year 550, when it was gravely, and for the first time condemned by a council of bishops and cardinals, who to say the least, had as much of the wisdom of the world, as they had of the spirit of Jesus. But in every age, from that day to this, there have been those who have seen and testified, that "the father sent the son to be the saviour of the world." Among the reformers, Zuinglius believed it, and it is thought that the illustrious Melancthon himself was not far from the kingdom. In latter days, and in the popular church many have believed. Archbishop Tillotson, Burnet, Law, the author of that inestimable work "A Serious Call," Dr. Samuel Clarke, the Chevalier Ramsey, Dr. Phillip Doddridge, Bishop Thomas Norton, John Prior Estlin, Thomas Belsham, Dr. Priestley, Ann Letitia Barbauld, the inimitable poet, and a host of others, whose names are illustrious in the church, have been believers in this doctrine.

In our own country, it has had its advocates. The celebrated Dr. Rush believed it, and the sage Franklin was not far from it. The beloved father of his country, was the friend of Murray, and Greene who gallantly *fought by his* side, hung with rapture upon the preach-

' the only herald of a world's salvation, then in
ca.

me not these things because they prove aught,
ay or the other: but I do it, simply to show you,
is not, as some suppose, a new doctrine, invented
the last half century, and believed only by the
nd inconsiderate.

whether it be new or old I have given you a hasty
of its most prominent features; and in my subse-
lectures, I intend to give you the proof of its truth.
ling to your candor and reason, and to the sacred
of eternal truth, I will lay the matter before you,
only ask you to approve or reject, as your own
nent, enlightened by revelation and unwarped by
ice or superstition, shall decide, and of the result
no fears.

## SERMON II.

### THE UNITY OF GOD.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. I Timothy, ii. 5, 6.

In a previous lecture, I gave you a statement of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, and promised that I would lay before you, in some subsequent discourses, the evidence on which we rest the defence of our faith. In prosecuting this work, it is proper for me to remark, in the outset, that there are several things, which we hold in common with all other denominations, and upon these it is not necessary that I should dwell. So far as the object of this discussion is concerned, these things may as well be taken for granted, as I intend to insist mainly on those points, which are *peculiar* to us, or in which we differ from others.

I gave you the existence of a God of infinite wisdom power, goodness, mercy, justice and truth, as the first article in our faith, and the foundation of all religious truth. I need not say, that this is a doctrine, which is advocated by all professors of Christianity, of every name, and it surely is not necessary for me to argue that matter, before an assembly of Christians.

I take it for granted then, in this discussion, that there is a God, and on that point I shall have no dispute with *any Christian*. But when I come to say, that God is *one and undivided:* and that Jesus of Nazareth, was

created being, dependent upon God for all his powers, I shall be met by those who contend, that God is *triune*, in nature, and that Jesus was the *very God*. The object of this discourse is to examine this question, and give you the reasons, which induce us to believe that there is *one God*, in *one person*, and that Jesus the mediator, was what the apostle calls him in the text, the *man Christ Jesus*.

In regard to the simple unity of God, the teachings of nature are not as clear and explicit, as upon many other points in theology. There is, however, a unity of design and purpose, and an order and harmony of operation, in the works of creation, evidently at war with the idea, that there are *many* superior beings to govern them. From the wonderful order and harmony of nature, the presumption is most unquestionable, that there is but one supreme God; but whether that God exists in a unity or trinity of persons, nature and reason cannot decide. The whole matter must rest upon revelation, and that revelation must of course be examined, in the light of that reason, which God has given us, and to which a revelation alone could be made. It is proper to observe here, that according to the soundest principles of reason, the question ought to be, whether there are three Gods, or one? The trinitarian has no right to assume, that there are *both* three Gods, and one; for that is not possible. If he proves that the Father is God, and that the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God, and that these are separate and distinct persons, all equal in power and glory; then, I have an unquestionable right to hold him to the position, that there are *three Gods*. If the scriptures teach this, then they teach that there are three Gods; and I cannot allow a man to *attempt an evasion of the* difficulty, by saying, that

these three are one; and that there is but one God af all. If it be meant, that Father, Son and Holy Gho are only different names of the same being; that *another* matter, but if it be contended, that each of the is a separate and distinct person, and each *verily* G then I hold you to the position, that there are th Gods. To say that the Father is God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet, there are three Gods, but one God, and then attempt to escape calling it a mystery, is but a miserable mode of ar ment. I maintain, that there is no mystery about but it is a direct and palpable contradiction. The tr is, there are either three Gods, or else, there is but o and no man has a right to claim that there are th persons, separate and distinct, each very God of v God, and yet, that there is but one God, and think escape, by taking a leap into the darkness of myste for I insist, it is not a mystery, but a contradiction.

I hope these remarks may be borne in mind, and hearer will remember, that the *true question* is n whether there are three Gods, and yet *one* God, but is, whether there is more than one God, at all.

Now, for the law and the testimony upon that poi If we speak not according to the divine word, it is cause there is no light in us. In the scriptures of old Testament, we read of many of the wonderful wo of God; and we have presented to us the teachings the patriarchs and prophets. There we read of God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and this sa being is represented as forbidding the people to wors any other God but him, for he repeats frequently, with peculiar emphasis, "I am God and besides there is none else." Now, I should like some m *well skilled* in the mystery of the trinity, as it is call

to inform me *which* of the three persons it was, that spoke this? This is a very important matter, because there is *some being* who speaks here, and claims to be God, and not only does he claim to be God, but he denies that there is any *other God* besides himself. We ask then, which of the three persons of the Trinity was it, that claimed to be *God alone?* If it was God the eternal Father, why then, he is God, and neither of the other two can be God. If it be said, that it was neither of the persons of the Trinity, but the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost who spoke; I beg to inquire how we know that fact? The book says, it was the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who claimed to be the only God, and it affirms further saying, "Hear oh! Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," and it is as silent as the grave about a Trinity. But who was the God of Abraham? Was it Jesus of Nazareth? Or was it the third person of the Trinity? Or was it the eternal Father of all? You know well enough, the answer that must be given to this question. Abraham worshipped the one only living and true God, and all the patriarchs and prophets, bowed with singleness of heart before him, as the one and indivisible I AM; and from all their writings and actions, it does not seem that they ever dreamed of his having an *equal* in earth, or heaven. During four thousand years, God was worshipped by patriarchs and prophets, as one only living and true God, and the name of a Trinity was unknown.

There is something inexplicable about this matter, which the trinitarian would do well to consider. It is admitted, on all hands, that the Jews worshipped the true God, and yet, they never prayed to Jesus, nor to the Holy Ghost, but always addressed all their prayers and *praises to God. One of* two things must be true: either

they were right, and worshipped God as one and undivided, or they were wrong and worshipped they knew not what. If they were right, then Jesus of Nazareth is not the very God, for they worshipped him not, and there is no other God but him that the patriarchs adored. If they were wrong, then God never made a revelation to the Jews, and the whole of the Old Testament is a fable, and the New, also, must fall, for Jesus built his Gospel upon the foundation of the prophets, and taught men to worship the same God that Abraham worshipped. The trinitarian may take which horn of the dilemma he chooses. One or the other he must have, for to prove that either Jesus of Nazareth, or the Holy Ghost, was worshipped by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is out of the question.

The New Testament writers are as clear and explicit upon this point, as they of the Old covenant. "There is one God," saith our text; and again says the Apostle, "Unto us, there is one God, the *father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now I ask, who was this one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Was it the Lord Jesus Christ himself? Or was it the third person in the Trinity? Or was it a being composed of the three? The answer to these questions is too obvious to need repeating. The God of the Apostle, was the God of Abraham, and he knew no other God. This God, was the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence could not be Jesus himself, unless a being can be his own father.

There is another remarkable fact, which should not be forgotten. It is, that Jesus himself acknowledged this same God and worshipped him, and prayed to him. Now, if he had been the very God himself, he would *not have worshipped*, or prayed, unless you suppose he *worshipped himself*, and prayed to himself, which is

absurd. I know men strive to evade this by saying, that he was God and man both, and that it was the human nature that prayed. But this is darkening counsel by words without knowledge. If Jesus was God and man both, and if sometimes the man spoke, and sometimes the God, by what rule, I pray you, are we to know when the man spoke, and when the God was heard? It is trifling with scripture to interpret it after this manner. If when Jesus prayed he was merely talking to himself, or if his human nature was praying to his divine nature, why in the name of wonder did not the historian say so, instead of informing us, that he kneeled down and prayed to his God, just as any other man would, and leading us from his words, and acts, to the conclusion, that he was praying to a superior being, whom he adored as his father and his God? If Jesus was the very God why did he say, that he could do nothing of himself, and that his father was greater than all? If he was the very God, and the equal of the All-wise, why did he affirm, that he, the Son, did not know the day or the hour of the coming tribulation? Yea, why did he say he could pray to his Father and he would give him twelve legions of angels? Or why did he in the agony of the cross, say, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Had he forsaken himself? These are questions that the trinitarian would do well to answer: and until he does so, and that satisfactorily, I shall hold with the apostle, that there is *one God*, and *that* God is the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not the Lord Jesus himself.

I am aware, that there are certain passages of scripture, which are thought to teach, that Jesus claimed to be the very God. It would be impossible for me, in a *discourse, to go into* an examination of all these pas-

here, and recede from his position? or did he give the true meaning of his words? If he gave the true intent of his words, then the Jews charged him falsely, when they said, he made himself God; and it is settled for ever by his own authority, that in all his conversation with the Jews, he claimed to be God in no other sense, than that in which their law called those gods, to whom the word of God came.

That he intended not to claim an absolute equality, or identity with God when he said, "I and my Father are one," is further evinced, in the fact, that he prayed that his disciples might be one even as he and his Father were one. "Holy Father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." It is therefore evident, that he claimed no other oneness with God, than that which it was possible for a number of men to possess with one another.

The believers could be one in spirit, one in purpose, and one in heart. Jesus had no will but that of God. His meat and his drink was to do the will of God, and the spirit of the Lord dwelt richly in him. In this sense and this only, he and his Father were one. I shall not have time, in this discourse, to examine any other passages of this kind, nor do I conceive such a work necessary. If the passage I have had under consideration, does not prove the identity of Jesus with God, I apprehend it will be difficult to find one that does, and I therefore rest it here.

We believe in one, and but one God, because the eternal Father says he is God and there is none else—because the patriarchs and prophets worshipped him, as one and undivided, during a period of four thousand *years—because* Jesus himself worshipped him, as the *Great Supreme*, and confessed his supremacy by praying

to him as the only living God, and father of all—and because the apostles and disciples of Jesus, acknowledged but one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe, that Jesus of Nazareth was "a man approved of God, by signs and miracles and wonders, which God did by him, in the midst of the people"—because the apostles called him so—and because he himself said he was the son of man, and prayed like a man, spoke like a man, felt like a man, was tempted like a man, and at last died like a man, and was raised from the dead to prove that man would rise. His office was that of mediator between God and man.

A mediator is a middle person, who stands between two persons that are strangers to make them acquainted with one another. Man was estranged from his God. He had wandered far from his ways, and is described as "having no hope, and without God in the world." It was the business of the mediator to reveal the true God, and make man acquainted with his father, and thus bring him back to that allegiance which he owed to him as God over all, blessed and blessing for evermore. But of this I may say more at another time.

The doctrine of the simple unity of God, is of great importance. It has a vast influence upon the spirituality and the sincerity of divine worship. The man who looks upon God, as *one* and undivided, can bow in the singleness of his heart before him, and worship in spirit and in truth.

Not so the man who worships a God who is veiled in an incomprehensible mystery. If he adores the justice of God, it is at the expense of a Saviour's mercy; or if he magnifies the riches of a Saviour's compassion, it is at the expense of a Father's justice, and thus the *mind is left to vascilate* upon the question, which among

the three is most worthy; and the affections are not easily fixed supremely upon either. Thus the flame of love supreme to God, which ought to burn with brightness upon the altar of the heart, is quenched, and the incense of praise is arrested in its upward course to heaven. "No man can serve two masters," was the doctrine of Jesus, and we do no violence to the spirit of the passage if we say, that no man can in sincerity and truth, worship *supremely two*, much less *three* Gods, and the truth of the position is clearly demonstrated in the case of believers in the Trinity.

I envy not that man his discernment, who has not discovered, that although the believers in the Trinity contend in words, for the strict identity, unity and perfect equality of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, yet in their worship, they are far from making them *one* or *equal*, in point of power or worth. When they address the Saviour, it is with the liveliest joy, and it is easy to perceive that he shares far more largely in their affections, than the Father or the Holy Ghost; and if there was no God but *him*, they would trust him without a doubt or a fear. But when they address the Father, it is in a different strain entirely. He is an austere and hard master, to whose goodness they are afraid to appeal; and hence, they rarely ask any thing of him for his *own goodness' sake;* but they ask him to heed the intercessions and groans and blood, of his more compassionate Son, and to spare and give for his sake. The Holy Ghost is rarely directly addressed at all, but Jesus and God the Father, are besought to send down the Holy Ghost, thus making the third person in this professedly equal trinity, a kind of subordinate, who does the bidding of the *first* and *second*. "No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the

other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." For this reason the idea of a Trinity is destructive of real, pure, heartfelt devotion, to one only living and true God.

Nor is the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus one of small moment. In our judgement the name of Christ ought not to be made a stumblingblock to the Jews, by being presented as claiming equality with him who claims to be God alone. Such a course does much to strengthen the hands of the infidel and cause him to glory in his rejection of the Gospel. The deist says, "I adore the God of nature. I see his name in characters of living light and glory upon the broad canopy of heaven; and in those worlds and systems of worlds, that throng the immensity of space. I see his goodness upon the earth, and in the order of his providence, and I love and adore him. But look yonder, to the cross, and in the agony of death you behold the christian's God. He died like a man! Nay," says he, "I cannot worship such a God." If the trinitarian replies, that his God did not die, but that it was the human nature only that died; the answer of the deist is ready. "Your system makes an *infinite atonement* necessary; and if the man only died, then you have no infinite atonement, and your whole scheme of salvation is good for nothing." Thus reasons the infidel, and what, I ask, have the whole host of trinitarians ever done toward meeting the argument? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

But I meet the infidel here. I tell him he is wrong in the very outset of his argument. Jesus of Nazareth never claimed to be the self existent God. He said he was the son of man. When therefore, you point me to the cross and tell me that my God died there, I say it is not so. Jesus is my Teacher, my Guide, my examplar, my

Master and my Saviour, but he is not my God; and all your reasonings upon that supposition, go wide of the truth, for your premises are wrong.

Again, the influence of the example of Christ, is greatly weakened upon those who view him as God. We may point to his example, his patience, forbearance, long-suffering, kindness, mercy and truth, and exhort our fellows to be like him; but the excuse will be ready. Oh! he is a God, and you cannot expect us to be like him. Give me leave to say, with the apostle, that he is the "man Christ Jesus, and tempted in all points like as we are," and then I leave man without a cloak for his sins.

I present an illustrious example of human excellence, and demonstrate the fact, that *humanity* can gain the victory over every unhallowed lust and passion. I thus fire the soul with emulation, by giving man to know that there are in his own nature capabilities, to which he was a stranger before, and the mind is filled with gratitude when it sees that God has stooped from his throne and raised man to the dignity of being the instrument of Salvation to the world.

Still again, the resurrection of Christ from the dead is dependent for its interest and power, upon the fact, that he was what the apostle called him, the man Christ Jesus. His resurrection from the dead is given us, as the proof that man shall rise also. Paul goes so far as to rest it all here. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they that are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished." But the resurrection of a God could give no assurance that *man* shall rise. But when we are told that he is the *man* Christ Jesus, and understand that he is "bone of our bone, and flesh of *our flesh," and* then view him in the brightness of his *risen glory, the* conqueror of death, the truth bursts w

full radiance upon the mind, for it is demonstrated, by actual experiment, that *humanity* is destined to burst the bars of death, and rise triumphant from the spoiler's power. All this is dependent upon the fact, that he is what the Apostle calls him in the text.

Let it not be said that these views are calculated to degrade the Saviour in the estimation of the world, or to undermine the foundations of confidence in his power to save. His example and character are not the less lovely because presented in the person of our *elder brother;* nor is his power less efficacious because he received it from his Father and our Father, from his God and our God. I love the Saviour, "as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." I revere him, as the perfect pattern of virtue and holiness. I respect him, as the being upon whom God has conferred all power in heaven and earth; and I trust him, as the conquering King of Zion, whose arm shall not be shortened until it has rescued the last child of sin from the power of the enemy, and established the empire of holiness and bliss, on the ruins of sin and suffering. Honour and glory be to Him who hath "saved us, and washed us in the washing of regeneration." Glory be to Him who hath loved us, and died, that he might return us to God; and who will not faint or grow weary until a world shall be brought home to holiness and bliss. I say, with the full heart, glory and honour be to Jesus, the Saviour; but I must say, "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST," that, on earth, there is "peace and good will to men." He is God and beside Him there is none else; and I cannot, I dare not, have any other God before Him. I leave this subject with you, and I pray you, remember that word which saith unto you, as it *said to Israel of old:* "Thou shalt worship the Lord *thy God, and Him* only shalt thou serve."

# SERMON III.

## ATONEMENT.

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just; even they both are abomination to the Lord." Proverbs xvii. 15.

INVARIABLE equity and strict impartial justice are the first principles of the divine government, and always mark the ways of God to man. When a man sins, justice requires that he should be punished, and accordingly, we find that God has so arranged the order of his government that punishment, sooner or later, comes fearfully upon, the head of the guilty. On the other hand, justice requires that the man who does good, should be rewarded; and, accordingly, we find, in our experience, that there is a rich and sweet reward in the practice of virtue. The scriptures everywhere teach that God is just, and they promise us, with the most solemn certainty, that the man who gives even a cup of water to a famishing brother, shall in no case lose his reward. In like manner, they assure us, with the same certainty, that the man who does wrong shall receive the reward of his doings, and, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." There are no principles in theology which are capable of exercising a more controlling influence upon human conduct than these. It is important, also, that there should be a certainty and definiteness about them which shall *leave no room* for a doubt, on either side. That man *labours with* a strong hand and a cheerful mind, who

feels that his reward is sure; and that man hesitates to do an evil act, who knows that he cannot escape the just punishment of his sins.

In order to illustrate the influence of these things, let us suppose that here is a man who has a number of workmen in his employ. To the faithful and obedient, he pays a liberal reward for their labours; but he never pays the man who does not labour. Every one in his employ knows, perfectly well, that, if he performs his duty, his reward is sure, and he will receive it, to the uttermost farthing. He also knows, with equal certainty, that, in case he is unfaithful and disobedient, his punishment is sure and inevitable; for his employer will in no case suffer with impunity an infraction of his orders. It is easy for any one to see, that the effect will be, a cheerful and willing obedience, and a faithful discharge of duty.

But let us vary the figure. Let us suppose that this man refuses to pay the labourer his hire, and that he makes no difference between those that serve him well, and those that serve him not. He even goes farther than this. He bestows the wages of the faithful upon the unfaithful; and when one labourer has transgressed, instead of punishing the transgressor, he chastises some innocent man, and lets the guilty go free. The labourers begin to reason in this way: "If I am faithful to my duty, there is no certainty that I shall receive my pay, for my employer would as soon give the reward of my toil to the indolent as to me; and if I transgress, he will not punish me, but will inflict the penalty of my fault upon some innocent man." I need not name the result of such a state of things; for the child can see at a glance, that the strong arm would be unstrung, and *the labourers would* be perfectly indifferent whether

they were faithful or unfaithful to their duty. If they were faithful, there would be no certainty of reward; and they would be in constant danger of having visited upon their heads, the punishment due to the unfaithful. If they were *guilty*, they would know that another, and not themselves, must suffer for their guilt.

This similitude, though homely, is a just representation of the influence of men's views of the government of God. The world needs *confidence* in the justice of its God. Man wants to know that the Great Governor of the universe will do right—that he will render unto every man according to his deeds. He needs to be confident that, if he does right, his reward is certain, and he is in no danger of being condemned for the sins of another. He needs also to know, that, if he does wrong, he shall suffer for the wrong that he has done, and that God will not inflict the punishment for his guilt upon the head of some innocent one, and suffer him to escape.

I make these remarks, because there is extensively prevalent, in the world, a doctrine which unsettles the foundations of firm confidence in the justice of God, and leads men to question the equity of his government. It makes men fear that they will not find a reward in well-doing: and hope to escape the punishment of their evil deeds, and thus it discourages the virtuous, and encourages the vicious. The doctrine to which I allude, is known among theologians, under the name of "Vicarious Atonement," and is as follows: It supposes all men to be placed, by nature and practice, under the curse of a broken law, whose penalty is endless condemnation and death; and, at the same time, utterly unable, of themselves, to fulfil the divine requirements, or make a particle of restitution for offences

already committed. God was indisposed to mitigate the sentence he had passed, or abate a fraction from the full penalty of the broken law; but was fully determined to exact the last mite. The sinner had nothing to pay, and could, of course, do nothing toward releasing himself. Fortunately, however, Jesus interposed and took the payment of the debt upon himself, and proposed to suffer in the room and stead of the sinner. *It was done*, and, according to Dr. Watts,

> "He quenched his father's flaming sword
> In his own vital blood."

Atonement is therefore defined by Buck to be: "The satisfying of divine justice, by Jesus Christ giving himself a ransom for us, undergoing the penalty due to sin, and thus releasing us from that punishment which God might justly have inflicted upon us." This is the doctrine of atonement as it is generally held, and you will recollect that I named it, in my first lecture, as a point upon which we differ from the common opinion. I also intimated that I should, at some future time, take it up at large. In fulfilment of that pledge, I propose to make it the principal topic of the present discourse.

In the definition of atonement, just quoted, you will perceive we are told, with sufficient plainness, that Christ actually suffered the punishment which was due the sinner in his *room* and *stead*, and thus released us from the punishment justly our due. Now I ask, what *was* the punishment which was due the sinner? The answer is, it was condemnation and death. And did God condemn Christ as a sinner, and treat him as such? So says the doctrine in hand. And was Jesus in reality a sinner? No, for he is called the just and holy one,

and no guile was found in his heart. And yet God condemned him, and punished him as a vile sinner!! If this be so, then I say, it is as evident as mathematical demonstration could make it, that God has "*condemned the just;*" and what does our text say about condemning the just? Hear it, and blush for that folly which will thus traduce the name of a God of justice. "He that condemneth the just is an abomination to the Lord." There is no chance for an evasion here: for, if it be true, that it is an abomination to God to condemn the just, and yet he has condemned the just, then he has done a thing which he abominates. But, if he has not "condemned the just," then the doctrine of vicarious atonement is a fable.

But this is not all. The doctrine in question teaches that God not merely "condemns the just," but he also justifies the wicked. It tells us that, in consequence of Christ's suffering for us, God releases the sinner from the punishment that is justly his due. If this be true, it needs no argument to prove that God has done another thing which he abominates. He condemns the just, in the first instance, and then he justifies and receives, as just and pure, the vilest trangressor of his law, and suffers him to escape all punishment. What does our text say of such things? Hear it, yet once more, I beseech you, and remember it for your good. "He that condemneth the just, and he that justifieth the wicked, even they both, are abomination to the Lord."

I ought not to leave this subject, without adverting to another doctrine, which seems to have been invented on purpose to hide the deformity of the one of which we have been treating.

*I allude to the* doctrine of "imputation." Buck *defines it thus:* "God's most gracious donation of the

righteousness of Christ to believers, and his acceptance of their persons as righteous, on account thereof; their sins, being imputed to him, and his righteousness being imputed to them, they are, in virtue thereof, both acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous." This is the doctrine of imputation and it is thought to relieve the doctrine of atonement from the charge of injustice. Thus, it is said, that the sins of the whole world were imputed to Christ, and, resting under this imputation, he might justly be condemned as a sinner. So, on the other hand, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner, and, therefore, there is no injustice in receiving him as a righteous man.

It must be confessed, that the inventors of this doctrine (for it is no more than invention of man) are entitled to some credit for ingenuity in forming a sentiment to get out of a difficulty. Unfortunately, however, the doctrine has no foundation, either in scripture, reason, or fact. The truth is, that righteousness is not a commodity that can be transferred from one to another, as a piece of merchandize; neither is guilt a thing that can be passed from man to man. They are both personal matters—things which pertain to individuals, and cannot be separated from them. I cannot be virtuous for my friend, nor can he be virtuous for me. To our own Master, we must stand or fall for ourselves. The same is true of guilt. It is in the nature of things, and in the government of God, as utterly impossible, for one man to assume another's guilt, as it is to assume his righteousness, and there is no more folly in one man's attempting to eat and drink and sleep for another, than in attempting to be virtuous or sinful for another. Suppose, for example, there is a foul murder committed in this city. *Is there a man* among you who would allow that

the guilt of that murder could be transferred to you, and you be justly punished for a crime you did not commit? No, not one. And if any man should intimate that you were guilty of the crime, you would hurl the imputation from you as a foul and disgraceful libel. Should he insist that the sin was imputed to you, and your character imputed to the real murderer, you would say at once, that the thing was impossible, and that having committed no crime, you could not, upon any principle of justice, be counted guilty. Suppose our state authority should arrest an innocent man, and execute him, while the murderer went free—it would be pronounced, by every man in community, a shameless and graceless outrage upon every principle of justice, and a disgrace to humanity. Men might plead as much as they pleased, that the murder was imputed to the innocent man and he was *willing* to assume it, and that the state had made a "most gracious donation" of the good man's character to the murderer: and the innocent man, suffering in his stead, would release him from the punishment which the state had a right to inflict upon him, and what would such pleas avail? They would be scouted from community, as the visions of a disordered brain, and we should be told that our system of jurisprudence recognized, as a first principle, that crime is not transferable, that the guilty *alone* must suffer for their guilt, and that it is a foul abomination in the sight of God to condemn the just and punish them for the sins of the wicked. We should be told, that the wise and prudent have so strongly maintained this principle, as to establish it as an axiom, that it is better for ten guilty men to escape than for one innocent person to suffer. *Thus men* reason, for they can reason well enough in *every thing* else but religion. But the moment we turn

our attention to theology, all these principles are violated, and we are presented as a *first article* of faith, a doctrine, which makes God do those very things which in men we despise and condemn, and which he himself pronounces an abomination in his sight. In the first place, he is made to condemn Jesus, the just, and inflict upon his head the punishment of the guilty, that he may justify the wicked; and then, to shield him from the charge of injustice, he is made to do what neither God nor man ever could do, transfer the guilt of sin, as well as its punishment, to the innocent, and the righteousness of the righteous, to the wicked. Why, in the name of reason, do men, who hold such views, find fault with the Catholic for believing in works of supererogation? It was long, you know, a favorite doctrine of the Catholic church, that all the works done by the saints, over and above what was STRICTLY required, went into a sort of general fund, from which others might make up the deficiencies of their own virtue. Thus, a portion of this righteousness could be imputed to others, and they receive its reward. Protestants have long since repudiated that doctrine as unjust, false, and pernicious; and yet, it is difficult to perceive a fraction of difference between that and the common doctrine of atonement, so far as the principle of the thing is concerned. In fact, it is the same doctrine carried out to its legitimate results and tendencies. If the righteousness of Christ can be transferred to me, so may that of Peter, or Paul, or any other man: and, if the punishment of *my sins* may be justly inflicted upon Jesus of Nazareth, by the same rule, it may be inflicted upon any of my hearers. The truth is, the whole system of vicarious atonement is wrong—an outrage upon all justice and *right, and, as such,* is pronounced by the voice of

inspiration, "an abomination in the sight of tl Lord."

That Jesus died upon the cross is beyond all questio that he died for the world, is equally certain, from tl divine testimony; but that he died a *vicarious sacrifi* to appease the wrath, satisfy the justice, or secure tl favor of God, and the escape of the guilty, is most u equivocally denied. God asks no blood of bulls or goa much less the blood of his own Son, to render him me ciful or good. The sacrifice of a broken and contri heart is all that the Lord our God requires; and to su up the whole in a few words, my objections to the dc trine of vicarious atonement are—that it is unjust theory, impossible in fact, and pernicious in practic It is unjust, because it punishes the innocent for tl guilty, and suffers the wicked to escape on account the shedding of innocent blood; whereas, the rule heaven's justice is, that every man shall suffer f his *own sins*, and that God will by no means clear tl guilty. It is *impossible* in fact, because righteousne and guilt cannot be transferred from one to anothe and the sufferings of the innocent cannot satisfy th justice which requires that the guilty alone shall suff It is pernicious in practice, because it encourages m on in sin, by fostering the delusive hope that there is easy way to escape from the punishment threaten against those who transgress.

It tells men, in effect, no matter how sinful they a Though wicked as Cain, and corrupt as Mary Magdale with her seven devils, Jesus has paid the debt for the and they can, at any time, on application to him, obta a discharge from all the claims of the divine justice, a *an imputation* of his righteousness, which will enab *them to stand* uncondemned in the sight of a pure

r God. The effect of such views can but be bad
n the practice of men.

have before said, that there is no question upon the
ject of the death of Christ for the world, so far as the
: itself is concerned. The only dispute is upon the
ure and object of his death. At some future time I
pose to make the sufferings and death of Christ the
ject of a discourse. I cannot, therefore, dwell upon
t point now. For the present, it may suffice to say,
t Jesus found the world in darkness, sin, and igno-
ce, and his object was to enlighten, purify, and in-
ict them. He knew that his testimony would cost
1 labor and suffering, and even his life. Yet he did
hesitate, but gave himself and all his powers to the
rk, and at last bowed his head and died upon the
ss, that he might seal his mission with his blood, and
his resurrection prove it all divine.

But the hearer will inform me that he certainly reads
in atonement in the New Testament, and he will de-
e to know what we are to understand by that term.
uspect, after all you have read about an atonement in
: Gospel, you will find, on a moment's reflection, that
1 have *heard* much more about it from the preacher
in you have *read* in the Bible. Will it surprise the
irer if I tell him that the word atonement is not to be
nd but once in all the writings of the New Testament?
ch is the fact; and I presume you will now agree
th me in saying that you were mistaken in the sup-
sition, that you had read much upon that subject in
e sacred book. In the 5th chapter of the Epistle to
e Romans, at the 11th verse, you may find the word
nement. It reads thus: "And not only so, but we
r in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also
*have now received the* atonement." You have now

before you the *only* passage in the New Testament in which the word atonement is used; and much as you thought you had read about it there, I pledge you my truth that you have read just that one verse, and no more. What is still more remarkable, is the fact, that the *atonement* there mentioned is something that the *Apostle*, and not God, had received. The common view of atonement makes it a satisfaction which God receives for the breach of his law. But the Apostle says, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." This is certainly the very reverse of the popular manner of speaking of an atonement. The atonement is thought to have been made to God, and to be received and accepted by him. But here the Apostle speaks of it as something that he and his brethren had received. The whole difficulty, if there is any in the case, will be removed when you are informed, that although the word "atonement" occurs but once in the New Testament, yet the same original word occurs frequently, and, except in this instance, is uniformly rendered "reconciliation;" and it evidently might better have been so rendered in this passage. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Here we have opened before us a full and correct view of the Scripture doctrine of atonement. Its simple meaning is, reconciliation, and I need not tell you that "reconciliation" to God is the most important doctrine of the Gospel. It was to reconcile man to his God, that Jesus came, and suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead; and this, also, was the end and object of all the labours, teachings, and sufferings of the Apostles, who took their lives in their *hands* and went out to preach the Gospel of Jesus. For *this reason* the Gospel is called the "word of reconcili-

ation," and its ministry is called "the ministry of reconciliation." Let patience have her perfect work among you, for I have dwelt long upon a false and spurious doctrine of atonement, and I must dwell at some length upon this, the true Gospel of Christ. "Be ye reconciled to God," is the first and the last, the highest and the holiest command of the Gospel; and it evidently indicates that those to whom it was given were then in a state of unreconciliation. Now, where there is unreconciliation, there is always dissatisfaction or enmity; and this is in perfect accordance with those Scriptures which speak of the carnal mind as being "at enmity against God."

The important idea with which we must start, in our investigation of this matter, is, that it is man who is dissatisfied, and at enmity with God, and not God who is at enmity with his creatures. Here is the radical defect of all the nameless systems of men. They start with the position, that God is unreconciled to man, and they labour to reconcile him to the world instead of the world *unto him*. If you will examine the subject, you will see, in a moment, that not only the false systems of Christian lands, but all others, err precisely upon this point. The Heathen have a multitude of gods, and their victims bleed upon ten thousand altars. Their children sink in the wave, their wives burn in the flame, and their own bodies are cast down to be crushed beneath the wheels of an idol's car. And what is it all for? What power is that which puts this vast machine in motion? The answer is, They think the gods are unreconciled, and they hope to reconcile them by these painful rites and heart-rending sacrifices. The very foundation, the main spring of the whole system and practice is, that the gods need a reconciliation. Chris*tians, too, have departed* from the corner stone that God

had laid in Zion, and have built upon this same heathen foundation. Christians, too, can talk of an angry God, and tell you that heaven's Lord and King is unreconciled, and something must be done to reconcile him, or the damnation of hell will testify to the extent and power of his hatred. Now, this is all wrong. I lay the axe at the root of the corrupt tree, and I testify unto you, that God never was and never can be unreconciled to the world; but man is unreconciled to God, and needs a reconciliation, or, if you please, an atonement.

The very nature of God is a full and sufficient proof that he can never be unreconciled to man, or that if he were so, he could never be reconciled. He is all-wise and immutable. He knew as well before he made man, what he would be, and what he would do, as afterward. When he put forth his power and called man into existence, his life and all its acts, his character and all its shades of darkness and of light, were as present with God as they are now. God saw it all, and in view of it all, he was reconciled to man, and pronounced him good, yea, very good. Now, as God was then reconciled, and as with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, it must follow, that he is now, and ever will be reconciled to man. Neither can any changes of man's character effect a change in God, or make him unreconciled; because God knew all these changes from the beginning, and had there been any power in them to work unreconciliation in God, he would have been unreconciled from the beginning.

That God is not unreconciled to man, is further evident from the fact, that his blessings are scattered daily around us, and the whole history of the world is a history of unearthly kindness on his part, and of ingratitude, and suspicion on the part of man. It is evident

also, from the Scriptures, which abound in the strongest expressions of love in God, and which represent the whole work of reconciliation as having originated in God and being of him. The mission of a Saviour is set forth as originating in the love of God, and not as a system of means for restoring that love after it had been lost. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his son for us. Besides all this, these same scriptures tell us, that God is reconciling the world unto himself, and they exhort us, saying: "Be ye reconciled to God." But they never speak of reconciling God to the world, nor ask us to do any thing to that end, for the best of all possible reasons, that he never was unreconciled, and, of course, no such work was necessary.

But what is it to be reconciled to God? I answer, it is to conform to the spirit of his law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: on these two commands hang all the law and the prophets." Now, when a man conforms to this law, he is reconciled to God; but, while there is hatred in the mind, there must be unreconciliation. The reason is perfectly obvious. "*God is love.*" Hatred is the opposite of love, and there never can be any concord or agreement between the two. But, when all hatred is purged out, and man learns to love God with the whole heart, and his neighbour as himself, then he becomes like God, and there is perfect concord between the two. Hence the Apostle says: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him, for God is love." This is reconciliation.

*But this is not all* that the term implies. It supposes

an entire submission to, and satisfaction with, God's government, providence, and purposes. The man who grudgingly submits to God's government, because he cannot avoid it, while, at the same time, he wishes that the reins of government were in his hands, cannot properly be said to be reconciled to God. But when a man comes to see that God is good, in all his works and ways, and that all his purposes are gracious, and he would not alter them if he could; then he is reconciled to God, and he can sentimentally rejoice that the government of the universe is vested in a being so wise, so gracious, and so good. This is reconciliation, in its full extent, and this is the true doctrine of atonement. This was the atonement which Paul had received through our Lord Jesus Christ. Before this he had been dissatisfied that God should suffer many things, and he breathed out threatening and slaughter. He had embraced hard and ungracious views of God, and he felt unreconciled to him and his ways. But Jesus revealed to him the abundance of grace and truth, and taught him better views of the economy of his Father's grace, and by this word he was reconciled to God. His soul was filled with love to God and man, and he confided in the wisdom of his Father to do all things well. This is the work of atonement, or reconciliation; and I cannot dismiss the subject without the remark, that this is one of the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. It is a doctrine which marks the Gospel of Christ as radically distinct from all other systems of religion. Man never yet made a religion, the object of which was not to have some influence upon the purposes or disposition of God. Go the world over, and you will *find that* all the systems of paganism have this object *in view*, and make it their first business, by rites and

sacrifices, to operate upon the divinity. Christianity alone proclaims God in his goodness, and seeks only to operate upon man. It is a remarkable fact, that precisely this point now separates Universalism from the popular systems of the day. They all have their vicarious sacrifices, by which they seek to operate upon God, and make him more gracious than he would otherwise have been. But we raise our feeble voices and cry aloud, proclaiming to one and all, that God is good enough as he is; he needs no change to make him better; but man, and man alone, needs to be brought up to communion with God, and a heartfelt reconcilation to Him.

## SERMON IV.

### DEATH OF CHRIST.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering." Hebrews ii. 9, 10.

In my last discourse, I spoke of the doctrine of "vicarious atonement," and endeavoured to show that it was a sentiment unfounded in reason, scripture, or fact. I mentioned the sufferings and death of Christ, and attempted to show that these were not designed to placate the wrath, or satisfy the justice, of God, and thus open a way for the guilty to escape the just punishment of their sins. If these things are granted, then the question will, very naturally, arise, in the mind of the hearer, what were the true intent and meaning of the sufferings and death of Christ? That he suffered much, that he died upon the cross, at last, and that his death is spoken of as having an important bearing upon the interests of humanity, and in a very different manner from that of any other individual—all this is unquestionable. If his death was not vicarious, the hearer will be ready to conclude that he died *merely* as a martyr to the cause which he had espoused; and, as Stephen and many others were martyrs, why should the death of *Christ be spoken* of in a manner so different from the *mode of speaking* of other martyrs?

To investigate these points and to explain to you, as clearly as I may be able, the precise nature and object of the death and sufferings of Christ, shall be the business of this discourse. I deem it proper to remark, that a love of the marvellous and the wonderful has had no small influence in magnifying the sufferings of Christ, as they are presented in the common doctrines of the day. It is thought that he suffered all that a world could suffer; that, upon him, was the tremendous load of the sins of a whole world, and that he was assaulted by all the powers of hell, at the same time; and, worse than all, deserted of God. That the sufferings of Jesus were great and severe, is unquestionably true; but I am not aware that there is any good authority for saying, that they were greater than would have been experienced by any other benevolent and sensitive being, under similar circumstances. The death of the cross is a cruel one, at best; but it would seem, from the historian, that the agonies of Christ were not prolonged to the usual time; for we are told that the soldiers "marvelled that he was so soon dead." Upon this, however, it is unnecessary to dwell, at any considerable length. He was beaten and scourged and finally nailed to the cross, and bowed his head and died, and no man can conceive that his sufferings could have been either few or small. But the question before us relates to the precise object of these sufferings.

Will it be said, that he died simply as a martyr? My answer is, that he was more than a martyr. Such was the state of the world, when he came, that it was certain he would be under the necessity of making his way through the most bitter and heartless persecutions. He knew, right well, that, if he preached efficiently the *truth of which he* was made a witness, he must encoun-

ter the inveterate hatred of the world, and that he would be pursued even to the very death. The alternative was before him, either to abandon his mission, and leave the world in darkness and vice, as he found it, or to go on, and establish his *truth* in the hearts of the people, at the expense of his life. He chose the latter; he gave himself, his labours, and his life, that he might restore men to the knowledge and service of that God, whom to know was life eternal. In this sense he was a noble and an illustrious martyr to the cause of human happiness; but even in this view, he differed from ordinary martyrs; because his death was certainly known, and on his part voluntary. There are many who have engaged in the Christian cause, well knowing that it would expose them to danger, and even put their lives in jeopardy. They have gone on, using all precautions, and endeavouring, by all honest means, to escape the power of the persecutor, and have died at last, because they could not avoid it. It was different with Jesus. He *knew*, from the beginning, that his life would be sought, and that his death would be certain. And he voluntarily undertook the work, with a full knowledge of the certain consequences. He went up to the altar with a firm and willing step, and said, "I will offer up my life, and thus seal my ministry with my blood." In this view, then, he differed from the mere martyr of necessity.

But if the death of Christ was not vicarious, or propitiatory, why, it will be asked, was it necessary that he should die at all? My answer is, that the necessity of his death grew out of the circumstances of the world, and the benevolent purposes of God toward man, inasmuch as it was the only means by which those purposes could be accomplished.

I. The sufferings and death of Christ were necessary, in order to exhibit before the world a perfect example for our imitation.

Before the days of Jesus, the question had been asked, "who will show us any good?" and various had been the models of goodness presented for the imitation of man. The sages of antiquity had taught morality, but they had poorly practised upon their own teachings; and the experience of four thousand years had demonstrated the fact, that it was not enough that man should have rules of morality and virtue laid before him in theory: it had shown that rules of ethics, however good, could have but little influence upon human conduct, so long as they were not exemplified in fact. Man wanted not only to be told what was good and right, but he needed to see it exemplified tangibly before him. It was not enough that the way through the wilderness should be pointed out, for man needed a guide that should go before him, as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, to lead him on his way. Jesus came to be that guide; and it was not enough that he should say, "this is the way, walk ye in it;" but it was necessary that he should go before, and lead his people on. Now, what I wish you to observe is, that this is a world of suffering. Sorrows, and temptations, and sufferings are the ills unavoidably incident to humanity. Hence, sufferings are necessary to draw out the perfections of the human character. In this light you will see that the sufferings of Christ were necessary, inasmuch as without passing through them he could not have been a pattern for our imitation. Suppose, for example, the life of Christ had been a continued scene of uninterrupted prosperity. You might indeed have seen an illustrious example of virtue *in one aspect.* But who can tell what virtue is until it

is tried? To whom, under these circumstances, could he have been an example of patience under suffering, of meekness under insult, of forgiveness under injuries, and of kindness even in death? He might indeed have taught patience, and resignation, and meekness, and forgiveness; but his teachings would have been comparatively powerless, because they would have been unaccompanied by a living example, illustrating their utility and practicability. You see, then, that in order to give efficacy and power to his teachings, it was necessary that they should be accompanied by a living example; and in no other way could Jesus present an example for man, but by passing through the temptations and sufferings through which man must necessarily pass. In order to give an example of patience under suffering, he must first suffer. To exemplify the virtue of meekness under insult, he must first be insulted, and to exhibit forgiveness for injuries, he must first be injured. By these sufferings, and these alone, could the amiable traits of character and Godlike virtues of Jesus be exhibited to the world. Hence, these sufferings were necessary; and hence also, the Apostle, in the text, gives us to understand, that the "Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering." It was these sufferings that drew out the perfections of his character, and but for them, the world, to this day, would have been ignorant of the perfection of human virtue.

There is still another view, in which the necessity of this example is seen in a still more striking aspect. It was necessary to prepare his followers for those noble and self-sacrificing exertions, without which his cause would have languished and died. Had Christianity been *nurtured in* luxury and earthly glory, and had its founder *been the* pampered child of fortune and adulation, how

would it have fared with his followers and his religion when the storm gathered dark and black around, and broke, "terrible as the voice of many waters" upon their heads. Age after age the followers of Jesus waded through seas of persecution, and "met destruction face to face." Though dangers stood thick through all the way, and fierce opposers met them at every step, yet with an indomitable courage, that no power could awe, and perseverance that paused not at death itself, they went onward, glorying in tribulation, and rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. These were the exertions that gave success to the Master's cause, and but for these, Christianity would have been exterminated. But where did the disciples learn to manifest a spirit like this? I answer, from the self-sacrificing example of their Master. It was this that kindled the same spirit in the Apostles, and taught them to be faithful even unto death. And the united example of the Master and his servants has exerted an influence that has been felt in every age, and in all circumstances where sufferings and dangers were to be encountered in the cause of truth. From Calvary and Gethsemane, and from every scene hallowed by the sufferings of Jesus, there comes a voice, bidding the Christian "be faithful." That voice has been echoed from generation to generation. In our own times it sounds full and clear, and it shall not cease till its silver tones shall mingle with the sound of the archangel's trumpet, when time shall be no more. Take away, now, the sufferings of Christ, and where would Christianity have been long ago? It would have died the death.

There is still another aspect, in which we may see the necessity of these sufferings, in their bearing upon *the permanent interests* of the Gospel. Had the life of

and behold the evidence of the love of God even to his enemies. There is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and such as is Jesus there, such is your God.

Now let me ask, by what other means could Jesus have given such an evidence of strong and everlasting love as this? He might have professed great love, but alas! man would have been slow of heart to believe, for painful experience has taught him that such professions are not always to be trusted, and we know not, who among all our friends loves us, until the day of trial comes. He might have told them again and again, that their Father loved them, and pointed them as he had done, to the fowls of the air and lillies of the field, to the *shining sun* and falling rain, as evidence of the fact; and he might thus have convinced them that God loved his friends; but his business was to do more than this.

It was to *prove* to the world, that the the love of God extended far *beyond* all human love, and embraced even his enemies. In his death he gave the demonstration of the fact. He laid down his life for his enemies, and in that tragedy of Calvary, the world saw, for the first time, an exhibition of loving kindness, that could not be overcome by all the guilt, sin, hatred and persecution of man. I can imagine no other way, in which so full an exhibition of the perfections of the divine character could have been made, and therefore I say, his death was necessary to a full and perfect revelation of his Father's name. The love of God was manifested in nature and providence. It was testified in scripture, but it was *demonstrated* and proved by the death of Christ; tangibly *exhibited* in his sufferings, and shone in full splendor *from Calvary* and its cross.

For this reason the writers of the New Testament all along, speak of the death of Christ, as the strongest possible manifestation of the love of God. "God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

"He that spared not his own son, how shall he not also freely give us all things." These are the testimonies of the apostles, in regard to the death of Christ. They saw in it the most perfect manifestation of the love of God: for in Christ himself they beheld the image of the invisible God; and it is a remarkable fact, that none of the inspired writers ever mention the death of Christ, as being the effect of the wrath of God, or the sacrifice offered to his justice. It is a commendation of the deep and unfathomable ocean of a father's love, and as such, they made it their hope and trust for the rich graces of the spirit in this life, and the unborn glories of a happy immortality. But I must leave this, and pass to another view of the death of the blessed Redeemer.

III. The death of Christ was necessary to prove the resurrection from the dead, and stamp the seal of eternal truth upon the divinity of his mission.

Life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel, through the resurrection from the dead. Before the Gospel came into the world, there was a thick veil of impenetrable darkness suspended between the vision of man and all beyond the grave. The question had been asked with fearful anxiety, "If a man dieth shall he live again?" But it had not yet been answered. The wise men of old had pondered long upon that question. Sages and philosophers, and poets, had tasked their mighty powers in search of proof, that man should live again; and in the end they confessed their ignorance, *and left the question* where they found it, and sighed as

they said, "man dieth, yea, he giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" And echo answered, where?

Now Jesus came into the world to throw light upon the darkness of the grave, and teach man that he should rise from the dead. How should that be done? It would answer no good purpose to teach man that it should be so, without giving the proof. Philosophers had taught this long ago, and had indulged in long and subtle trains of argumentation to prove that it should be so. But yet the world was without hope in the future. Man needed not only the theory but the fact, and weeping humanity cried aloud, not for speculations; for they had enough of these, but for a demonstration of the truth by actual experiment. It was needful, therefore, that Jesus should rise from the dead, and thus prove the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and give man a hope that should be as "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." But he could not rise from the dead, unless he first died; and hence you will see that his death was necessary to prove the truth of his mission, and to bring life and immortality to light. Nor is there any other imaginable way, in which such a hope could be given. In this light then you will see, that the death of Christ differs from the death of martyrs in another important respect. Martyrdom in general, is no more than a proof of the sincerity of the martyr. When a man persists in his adhesion to certain doctrines in the face of death, it is an evidence, and the highest evidence that he is sincere in his belief of certain principles, but it affords no proof of the truth of the principles themselves, for a man may be sincere in the belief of falsehood. But in the case of Christ, you see his death was *necessary*, not merely as a test of his sincerity, but as *the means* of demonstrating the truth of his doctrines

For this reason, when the Jews asked a sign, he said, "destroy this body, and in three days I will raise it up." Hence, also, the Apostle rested the whole proof of future life on the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. "If Christ be not risen," says he, "your faith is vain, our preaching also is vain." But Christ could not have risen from the dead, except he had first died, and hence his death was a necessary part of his mission.

Take away, now, the death of Christ, and what do you do? Why, you just destroy the glorious fact of his resurrection; you make him an impostor, and destroy the whole fabric of Christian hope. It is no wonder, then, that the death of Christ should be mentioned in different language, and as far more important than the death of any other man.

It was not to be expected, that with such views the divine writers should compare the death of martyrs with this, for this had a bearing upon the hopes of a world, and was inseparably connected with the very foundation of all Christian hope. But for that death, and the consequent resurrection from the dead, darkness and eternal night would still have brooded over the grave; and for aught that men or angels could tell, death would have been the final end of man, with all his hopes and joys. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that through death, he might destroy death, and him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Mark you, it was through death, that he destroyed death, and wrought the deliverance of those who were subject to the bondage of fear. Well, then, might the Apostle glory in the cross of Christ. It was the cross that led to the tomb, and it *was the tomb that* was consecrated by the presence of

Jesus, and enlightened by the glory of his resurrection. Thus, through death, he shed the radiance of an eternal morning upon the night of the grave, and illumined the shadow of death with the dawn of a glorious and happy immortality, where humanity, raised in the image of Jesus, shall assimilate to its God, and live the eternal monument of his faithfulness and love.

I have now given you my views of the nature and intent of the death of Christ, and of their efficacy in the great plan of redemption. Though I cannot allow that his blood flowed to appease the wrath or satisfy the justice of God, and though I am positive that it was not God's justice, but man's injustice and wickedness, that made these sufferings and this death necessary, yet I cannot allow the truth of the charge, that we deny the efficacy and power of the Saviour's death. I praise my God that he sent his Son, who laid down his life for our sakes, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and give us good hope and everlasting consolation through faith. I thank heaven with a full heart, that Jesus was faithful even unto death, and that he "died that those who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto God." While I live may I cherish the remembrance and love of him, to whose labours and sufferings I am indebted for all that I am above the pagan, who bows to gods of wood and stone; and when at last the solemn hour shall come, that shall call me hence to be here no more, I pray that faith in the name of Jesus may enable me to close my eyes in peace, with the triumphant song upon my lips, "Oh, grave! where is thy victory? Oh, death! where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## SERMON V.

### PUNISHMENT.

"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Psalms lxxxix. 30, 33.

In my introductory lecture, I gave it you as one of the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of Universalism, that no man can, by any possibility, escape the just punishment of his sins. In my subsequent lectures, I have shown, that it was no part of the object, either of the labours, sufferings, or death of Christ, to open a way by which the guilty could evade the rod of his Father's justice. I purpose, in this discourse, to speak more at large upon the certainty and the object of punishment. I have more than once said, that no man can escape the just punishment of his sins; and before I proceed with the proof of the proposition, it will be necessary for me to explain my ideas of a just punishment.

I commence with the position, that there is a vast difference between justice and revenge; a difference which seems almost entirely to have been overlooked by the theologians of this day. The difference is, that revenge is vindictive, while justice is never so; revenge is retrospective, while justice is prospective; revenge looks upon the past, and seeks satisfaction for an injury done; but justice looks to the future, and seeks the re-

formation of the offender. Hence, it is evident that the "lex talionis," or law of retaliation, has no foundation in justice. Let me illustrate. Your child transgresses your commands, and you punish him severely. Now, it depends entirely upon your object, in the act of punishing, whether that punishment is justice or revenge. If you inflicted the stripes in a fit of anger, looking only at the offence, and seeking satisfaction to yourself for the injury done, then it was sheer revenge. But if you did it in the kindness of a father's love, because you thought the good of the child demanded it, and with the purpose of working out a reformation in the child, then, in *you* it was justice, even though it might have been severe. So it is in the government of God; I speak it with reverence; God himself has no right to punish in revenge, or with a vindictive spirit. He brought us into existence of his own good pleasure, and without our knowledge or consent, and he is bound, by the principles of his own nature, to do us justice; and he has no right, in the nature of things, to do an injury. The right to punish for sin, has its foundation in the fact, that sin is "an evil and bitter thing," and its practice productive of evil to man. For this reason alone, is it right to punish men at all; for, if sin were more conducive to human happiness than virtue, it would not be right to prohibit its practice. But sin being an evil, justice looks to the removal of that evil; it is, in fact, the remedy for it, and looks continually to the good of the sufferer. Hence, then, the conclusion is logical and irresistible, that a just punishment can never be more severe than the evil of sin; for in that case, you would make the remedy worse than the disease itself. Again, you will see, from the *foregoing*, that the true standard of justice cannot be *found in* any precise quantity of punishment. I mean

to say, that it is impossible to fix upon a standard which shall say, that so many degrees of guilt shall deserve and receive so many degrees of punishment, for that would destroy all distinction between justice and revenge. I am particular on this point, because it is here that men fall into a most pernicious error. The common opinion seems to be, that an inflexible standard is erected, and that so many pounds of punishment (for I know no better illustration) must, at all hazards, follow so many pounds of guilt. Hence, when we say that no man can escape the just punishment of his sins, the cry is raised, that there is no mercy, and that we destroy the mercy of God! Why, my dear sir, do you not see that the very punishment itself is inflicted in mercy? The sinner is sick; "from the crown of his head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness in him," and God, in his mercy, administers the medicine; bitter, indeed, it may be, but it is administered by the hand of a Father's kindness. Hence the Psalmist says, "Great is thy mercy, O Lord, for thou renderest unto every man according to his works." But, to return to the point from which we started,

The right to punish is, as I said, founded in the fact, that sin is an evil, and punishment is the remedy of that evil, its object being to enforce obedience to the law. For this reason, it is impossible that there should be a perfect rule prescribing the precise quantum of punishment due to every degree of guilt; because, in the first place, this would make punishment not just, but vindictive; and in the next place, it would, in some instances, necessarily fail of its object, and in others go far beyond. The object of justice is to enforce obedience, and effect a reformation; and when that object is secured, when *the transgressor is reformed*, and the sinner made obe-

stances, love and kindness are the elements of the sou but wrath and hatred will burn like fire in the boson and destroy your peace; for God himself has so mac man, the world over, that, if we would be happy, w must love one another and be kind. I say, then, th the very constitution of man is proof that there is r escape from the punishment of our sins; and all our e perience bears its testimony to this solemn truth. Y may as well attempt to stop the sun in the firmamen or roll back the wheels of nature, as to interfere wi that eternal law which God has revealed in the Bibl and written on our very souls, declaring that love on is the delight of the soul, and that hatred will corro the moral powers, and pour a flood of moral pois through all the channels of a healthful, moral existenc

II. I prove that no man can escape the just punis ment of his sins, from the clear and explicit testimoni of scripture.

If there is one point more clearly established by t concurrent and explicit testimony of all the divine wr ters than another, it is the truth that God will visit ce tain and inevitable punishment upon those who tran gress his laws. The very first prohibition that Gc made, was sanctioned by this penalty. "In the da that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." In a ter times, God proclaimed himself as, "the Lord, th Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, an abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy fc thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, an that will by no means clear the guilty." "Thoug hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished. "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" and "he tha *doeth wrong*, shall receive for the wrong that h *has done*, and there is no respect of persons." Thes

are the teachings of the Bible upon the point in hand, and it is remarkable that all these threatenings are made without any proviso or conditions whatever; but are, in the strictest sense of the term, unconditional. When God says that he will, by "no means clear the guilty," I cannot suppose he meant to be understood that he himself had prepared the means by which the vilest of the vile might escape from all that punishment to which their sins expose them. It were trifling in God, to threaten men with punishments which he never intended to inflict, and I dare not thus charge falsehood and deception upon the Holy One of Israel. I pray you, then, beloved, think not that God is a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent. His words are faithful and true, and the thing that he saith, even that will he do. The adversary, in ten thousand shapes, may attempt to deceive you. He may come in the garb of an angel of light, a minister of the Gospel, and tell you to follow his directions, and ye shall escape the justice of your God. I warn you, heed it not. Lay not the flattering unction to your soul; it is an "ignis fatuus that leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind." It leads ten thousand astray, and involves them in many woes. It is this hope of an easy escape, that urges men on and makes them bold in sin. Oh! fly from it, as from the pestilence "that walketh in darkness and wasteth at noonday;" for God is true, he will "by no means clear the guilty." You may lock your crimes in the secret recesses of your own heart; but God will find them out. You may flee to the darkness, where the eye of man cannot penetrate; but that darkness is light before him, and even there will his justice scourge you with a thong, that no vigilance can elude, *no fortitude* endure. I pray you therefore, yet

once more, think not that any man can sin with impunity, for it is an idle dream.

I suppose the hearer will, by this time, inquire if we do not read in the Bible, of forgiveness and pardon, to the penitent? I answer, yes; and, in my next discourse, I intend to take that subject up at large, and show that there is no incongruity between the idea of forgiveness or pardon, and a just and adequate punishment. At present I have merely time to observe that the forgiveness of sin, of which we read in the scriptures, and the forgiveness of punishment, of which we do not read are two distinct and different things which ought never to be confounded.

Having shown, as I trust, that the first part of the text is true, to wit: "If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes;" I proceed to illustrate the latter clause "Nevertheless my loving-kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." The position, I assume, is this:—

All the punishments that God lays upon men, are the well intended chastisements of a merciful Father and so many testimonies of his parental faithfulness and love. Now for the proof of that position.

The first argument in its favor is drawn from the nature of God. We are informed by the beloved disciple that *God is love.* I have before made the remark, that God is not said merely to be lovely, but he is *love itself* He is *love now, love* henceforth, and *love* for evermore Now it is impossible for the same fountain, to send forth *waters both* bitter and sweet. God is the fountain, and *all the streams* from that fountain must of necessity

partake of its own divine nature. Whether these streams come to us in the form of chastisements, or of undisguised mercies makes no difference. Whether they silently and smoothly glide through the verdant plain, and sweetly murmur in the valley, or rush down the rugged mountain's side, with the noise and din of the cataract, makes no difference; they all flow from the same fountain: that fountain is *love*, and the streams must be love also. As certainly, therefore, as you can judge of a stream by knowing the fountain from which it flows, so surely can you judge of the nature of chastisements, by knowing the fountain from which they proceed. If God is love, then all his punishments are inflicted in love, and it is impossible that one particle of hatred can flow from such a fountain.

Again, God is immutable, and knows no change. Men may change, and they do all fade as a leaf; but God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He is not love to-day and hatred to-morrow, nor can any change in his creatures work a change in him. Now the scriptures assert, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son to die for us." Here then you find, that there was a time when God loved even an ungodly world. If therefore, he is immutable he will ever continue to love them, and even the fact that he chastises them, cannot be received as an evidence that his love has turned to hate, for he changes not.

Another argument in favor of our position, we derive from the fact that God has revealed himself to us in the relationship of a father. Now there are certain duties indispensable to the parental character, and neither God nor man, nor any other being can truly sustain that character without the performance of these duties. *The most solemn* duty of a father is to love his children,

under all circumstances and at all times. In no one ac does a father give more unequivocal evidence that h loves his children, than in his chastisements for thei follies and sins. Suppose for instance, I should see on of my hearers chastising his child. I would go awa and say, that man did not love his child; and if yo asked the reason why I thus judged, my reply should b that I saw him punishing the child. How quickly shoul I hear from the accused the reply, that the punishmer proceeded not from hatred but from love. I love m child, and for that very reason I chasten him. If cared not for his welfare I should take no notice of hi faults; but feeling as I do, my own happiness indisso lubly connected with that of the child, I am constraine to use even the rod of reproof to save him from th snares of the tempter; and the very fact that I chaste him is the proof of my love. Dear to my heart as th apple of my eye, is the image of my child; precious as my own right hand itself, is the happiness of m wayward boy. But he *must* be trained to virtue, tha he may grow up in usefulness and happiness. To thi end I chasten him; for his good I sacrifice for the tim being, all the pleadings of a parent's tenderness, an cause pain to him for whose sake I would rush in th midst of danger and death. Oh! how little does tha mistaken child know of the feelings of a parent, wh supposes that he chastens him for his injury! Just s little does that man know of the character of his hea enly Father, who views his punishments in any othe light but the kind administrations of a friend, who seek our permanent good, and who knoweth that althoug "no chastening seemeth joyous for the present, bu *grievous*, nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peace*able fruits* of righteousness unto those that are exe

cised thereby." The man who will allege these chastisements as evidence of God's hatred, is not less foolish than he who should contend that a parent did not love his child, because when the child was sick, he refused it the food it loved, and gave a bitter medicine. The fact is, this is the best evidence of his love. So Paul makes the chastisements of God the proof, that he is a father and we his children.

"If ye be partakers of chastisements, God dealeth with you as children, for what child is he whom the father chasteneth not. But if ye be without chastisements whereof all are partakers, then are ye illegitimate children and not sons." Here you see the Apostle alleges the fact that God chastises his creatures, as the evidence that God was a father, and man a child.

I say then, the character of God as a father, is proof that all his punishments are inflicted in love, and that though he "visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, nevertheless, his loving kindness he will not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail."

The third argument that I offer in proof of the position assumed, is, that it is clearly taught in scripture. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and scourgeth every one that he receiveth." "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as the father the son, in whom his soul delighteth." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent." "The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, but though he cause grief yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies." These are the testimonies of the divine word, and they certainly teach, if they teach any thing, that the rod of punishment in God's hand, *is in the hand of a father* who wields it only for our good.

Here I pause, and I shall leave you to decide how far I have succeeded in sustaining the several positions I have assumed. I cannot leave this subject with a consciousness of having fully discharged my duty, without remarking that these views of the divine government, cannot fail of being most salutary in their moral influence. It is the certainty, far more than the magnitude of punishment, that has a restraining influence. Punishment to be effectual in preventing crime, should be near and inevitable. "Prompt pay is the life of business," has grown to a proverb; and there is a great deal of true human nature, and important instruction in the case of the man who was caught in the act of stealing, and on being reminded by the owner of the goods that he would pay for them on the day of judgement, promptly replied, "If I had thought you would trust so long, I would have taken more." It is a small thing, I know, but it is not less instructing. Who does not know, that when men can get long credit, they are apt to go in debt? The great difficulty with the common doctrines of the day is, that these credits are too long, and the ultimate payment too uncertain. They do indeed threaten the sinner with a most severe and tremendous punishment. But it is a great way off. It lies beyond the curtain of death, whereas the temptation to sin is present and real.

But worse than this, they give to every man the privilege of escaping even that distant punishment, on the most easy terms. What avails it, to tell a man that God has threatened him with an endless hell, when in the same breath you tell him, that there is no need of his going there after all? What avails it to tell a man *that justice* has a long account against him, if at the *same time*, you assure him that a fit of repentance will

at any time, settle that account in full, and give him a free and perfect discharge? "Quick as the thunder follows the lightning, should punishment follow crime," for in this way alone can its moral power be felt: and it should be as inevitable as it is speedy.

Another idea that must not be forgotten, is that punishment in order to be effectual, should not be too severe. If it is so severe that its justice is not seen, or its kindness appreciated, the weak and the timid will faint and fail before it, and the stout-hearted and rebellious will despise it, and brave it with a reckless spirit. Shall I appeal to facts? Well then it is a fact, that in all ages, and in all countries, where the laws have been most sanguinary, and the punishments most cruel, there has crime most abounded. On the other hand, where the laws have been most mild, and the punishments most merciful, there have the laws been most respected and best obeyed. The history of the world, from Adam to the present day, will bear me out in these declarations, and the present state of the world will bear witness to the same truth.

In religious matters, the same principle will hold good. Go to heathen lands, and mark the influence that is there exerted upon the moral character of the people by the different systems of religion that prevail. Why is it, that crime, in every form, and in all its aggravation and excess, stalks abroad unmasked in the light of noonday? Is it because the people do not believe in gods that will punish them? I tell you, nay; for there the drear and dark dungeon of Pluto, with all its infernal apparatus of torture, is constantly held up before the mental vision of the people; and there the seven blazing hells of Mohammed are heated seething *hot, as a terror to evil doers.* Why, then, we ask, are

not the people reformed? The answer is, that their punishments are cruel, and under their fear, the heart becomes callous and hard, and the mind desperate. But let us come nearer home. Great are the exertions that are made for the reformation of the people of this country, and yet we not unfrequently hear that the people are growing worse instead of better. May I ask what is the reason of this? Why are not the men of our country better? Is it because they do not believe in punishment enough? In all conscience, are not the power of the devil and the fear of hell preached enough to content you? This is the burden of the theme, in the pulpit and in the prayer-meeting. The tremendous wrath of an angry God, has been proclaimed, and one continual blaze of damnation has been streaming from the pulpit, for years past; and every spectre, ghost and devil, in the compass of the human imagination, has been pressed into the work of frightening men into religion. And yet the world is wicked. If there is any power in these systems, that power has been most faithfully tried. They have been preached powerfully, they have been listened to attentively, they have been believed most faithfully; and yet the world is not reformed, and we can scarcely say it is reforming. There is no reforming power in them, for they lack the only thing that can give efficacy to doctrines of punishment, the conviction that God rules in everlasting kindness, and, though he smite, in the equity of justice and judgement, "nevertheless his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail." I leave my subject with you, for the present, and I pray you, yet again, think of these things. Let no serpent *whisper* in your ears the seductive tale: "Ye shall not *surely die,*" for God hath said: "The soul that sinneth

it shall die." At the same time forget it not, I pray you, he is faithful, and, though he wounds, it is that he may heal, and, though he kills, it is that he may make alive.

## SERMON VI.

### FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye, comfortably, to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

THERE are two propositions clearly established by the language of this text. The first is, that the people of Jerusalem had received a just and adequate punishment for all their sins; and the second is, that these same sins had been forgiven or pardoned. To those who are in the habit of associating with the word pardon, an idea of the remission of just punishment, it may appear like a solecism, that any people should be both punished and pardoned. But this is most plainly affirmed in the text, of the people of Jerusalem; and what may appear still more singular, is the fact, that they are said to be pardoned *because* they have been punished. The language is, "her iniquity is pardoned, *for* she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." The hearer will recollect that, in this course of lectures, hitherto, I have insisted, somewhat strenuously, upon the doctrine that all sin shall most certainly be punished; and I have, more than once, denied, in the most unequivocal manner, that there is a possibility of any man escaping the reward of his iniquities. In my last discourse, I gave you the testimony of reason, scripture, *and* experience, all harmonizing, as I suppose, in the

declaration that the transgressor of God's laws must be punished.

To this doctrine there are, in the minds of many, some objections; and, I may as well remark, that it is not surprising that it should be so. From the day that our first parents transgressed, down through all subsequent ages, I may safely say, that there has been no one thing, upon which the ingenuity of man has been so much exercised, as that of finding out some salvo for the guilty conscience. Some hiding place from the storm—some refuge from the arm of justice, has been the first and highest object of the guilty children of men. It is not, therefore, surprising that some of these "refuges of lies," should still remain, and that a sinful world should still cherish the hope that they can yet escape from that justice they so much dread. Notwithstanding the word of the Lord declares, as it always has done:—"There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves;" yet the ingenuity of man has never tired in devising, nor his hand in executing, plans for eluding the vigilance of divine justice.

In a former discourse I spoke of the doctrine of atonement, which has long been thought to offer the means of a sure escape for the guilty; and I come now to speak of the doctrine of forgiveness and pardon, which is much used for the same purpose; and it shall be the business of this discourse to lay before you the true scripture doctrine of forgiveness, and show that it in no way conflicts with the idea of a full and adequate punishment for sin. In pursuing this object it will be necessary to consider,

I. The doctrine of punishment as set forth in the *scriptures.*

This part of our subject has been, in a great me anticipated in my previous labours, and a few addi remarks will be all that is necessary. The tex that the inhabitants of Jerusalem had "received Lord's hand double for all their sins." From thi evident, that the justice of God does not recogni principle of punishing some sins, and permitting to go "unwhipt of justice;" for Jerusalem had re for all her sins.

The expression that they had received double, not to be understood in its most literal and stri ceptation. It is a strong mode of expression, freq used in Scripture, to denote a very exact rewa cording to the strict demands of justice. It is pr that this form of expression originated in certai visions of the Mosaic law. Under that law, th who stole, or trespassed upon, his neighbour's go cattle, was required to restore double to the owne this was considered a just and righteous punish Out of this fact, most probably, grew the express "rendering double," and it should not be underst intending to teach that any one had received *twi* amount deserved, but merely that he had received and equitable punishment.

It is therefore obvious, from the text, that G only punished the people of Jerusalem for all thei but that he had done it in this world. Whether *ners* are fully punished in this world, I will not tively say; but if the people of Jerusalem were as they are represented to have been, I think it be difficult to find any worse sinners than these; they were fully punished in this world, there is n *culty in the* supposition, that all others may recei *reward of* their doings here also.

The popular notion of the demerit of sin is thus set forth in the Westminster Catechism. "Question. What does each sin deserve? Answer. Each sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this world and that which is to come." I scarcely need remark, that such an opinion of the just demerit of sin stands utterly irreconcilable with the doctrine of the text; for it destroys the possibility of any man's ever receiving the just punishment of even one sin. The punishment of a single sin is here set forth as the wrath and curse of an infinite God extending through all time and eternity. It is easy to perceive that, upon this ground, the time will never come, when it can be said that any man has received a just punishment for one single sin. Suppose, for instance, a man has been sent to hell, and has remained there ten thousand times ten thousand years. Can it then be said, according to this doctrine, that he hath received for one sin? to say nothing of all his sins. Most evidently not; and when ten thousand ages more shall have passed, he will be just as far from having received his punishment in full as when he first began.

But there is still another view of this matter. If one sin deserves infinite and eternal wrath, will it please some wise D. D. to inform us how much two sins deserve by the same rule? This is a very important question, and it ought to be answered; because if one sin deserves a given amount of punishment, the common sense of the matter would seem to be, that two sins would deserve more. And if we are to understand that one sin deserves so much that it will take an eternity to satisfy the demand, we are anxious to know when the time will come, that it can be said of those whose hands are stained with ten thousand crimes, as the text says *of the people of* Jerusalem, "they have received of the

Lord's hand double for all their sins." The truth is, that all distinction between crimes is destroyed by this doctrine, and the child who for the first time transgresses the law, becomes as guilty, and deserves a punishment as severe and lasting, as the hardened offender upon whose head is the guilt of twice ten thousand sins.

Again, the very nature of man is a sufficient refutation of the sentiment in question. Man is finite in all his powers and capacities, and consequently in all his acts, and of course an infinite punishment for any or all his acts, is at war with every proper idea of justice.

Still again, there is no principle of justice more obvious than this. The guilt of crime must, in all cases, be measured by the knowledge and intention of the perpetrator. Now, as man has but a limited and imperfect knowledge of good and evil, it must follow, as a clear and indubitable conclusion, that no man can commit a crime which will justly deserve even the semblance of an infinite punishment. But not to insist on arguments of this kind, the Scriptures do not inform us that each or all the sins of man deserve "God's wrath and curse both in this world and that which is to come." It is the Catechism, and not the Bible, that says this.

There are other instances, also, besides the text, where we have an account of sinners and their punishment, and they give us no intimation that the guilty received a portion of their punishment in this world, and that the remainder was reserved for a future state of existence. When our first parents sinned, it is but reasonable to suppose, that God would let them know the worst of the case. But we do not find, in all the history of that affair, the remotest intimation that they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God in a future world. The ground was cursed for man's sake;

the woman was informed that her sorrows should be multiplied, and the man, that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his face, and that he should return to the dust from which he was taken; and there the curse ends. The same is true in the case of Cain, who slew his brother. The curse was, "Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be *in the earth*;" and there is the end of the threatening.

Now, if it were true that Cain and our first parents had exposed themselves to a state of future wo, in comparison with which all the miseries of this life were but as a drop in the bucket, why, in the name of humanity and truth, did not God tell them so? Why was he so careful to point out the little paltry evils, as they are called, of this life, and say not one word to them of the more awful and terrible woes to which they were exposed in the eternal world? Let this matter be satisfactorily explained, and you will do more toward convincing me that this cruel dogma of endless torments may possibly be true, than has ever yet been done.

Let it be remembered, that our text also refers to the case of a most wicked and rebellious people, and I think it may be asserted that no people on earth ever deserved a more severe punishment than these Jews. None ever enjoyed greater advantages of knowing their duty, and none ever departed more widely from it; and yet the text says that they had been fully punished for all their sins. Now, one of two things must be true. Either this people never deserved the wrath and curse of God in another world, or the prophet was wrong in teaching that they had been fully punished for all their sins; for

they certainly had not yet been in another world. But if the prophet was right, and these most abominable sinners had received a full and adequate punishment, then that doctrine which consigns them to the intolerable wrath and endless curse of God in another world, is utterly without the countenance of the divine word. This conclusion comes to us with all the force of the clearest demonstration; and I imagine that the wisest theologians of the day will find it no easy task to harmonize the doctrine of endless punishment with the statement of the text, that the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem had received a full and adequate punishment for all their sins. I conclude, from what has been said, that the idea of punishment for sin, does not necessarily involve the notion of future torments.

II. I come now to speak of the doctrine of forgiveness, or pardon, as it stands related to that of punishment.

"Her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." You will readily perceive that the common doctrine of pardon, which makes it mean a remission of just punishment, is at variance with the text; for in that case it would be impossible that a sin could be both punished and pardoned. Aside from the text, however, there are many and weighty reasons why such a view of the doctrine cannot be allowed. Some of these I may lay before you.

First of all, justice forbids it. When the law is transgressed, justice requires that the punishment should be inflicted; and it is an infringement upon the claims of justice, to allow the transgressor to escape, under any pretence or for any purpose.

*It may be* urged, as it frequently has been, that mercy *has claims*, and that if we deny the possibility of an ex-

cape, we deny the mercy of God. Where is mercy, says the objector, if this doctrine is true? My reply is, that mercy is not, as ye seem to suppose, a mere "ex post facto" attribute of God, which had nothing to do, or was not born until man had sinned, and the penalty of the law was impending over his head. The fact is, the Lord was merciful in the beginning; and when he made the law, he was as merciful as he is now, or ever will be. You ask me where is mercy, if the penalty of the law must be inflicted? Suffer me, in my turn, to ask a question. Where WAS mercy when that law was made, and the penalty annexed, if she will not allow it to be executed now that it is made? You would do well to remember that God was always merciful; and when the law was made, and the penalty annexed, the guardian, pitying angel was there, and saw and approved both the law and the penalty; and hence it is not possible that she will interfere with the execution of a law which she once approved, for she knoweth that God never annexed a penalty to his law greater than was consistent with the tenderest mercy. If you ask me, then, where is mercy? my answer is, where she always was; in God, in his law, in his penalty to the law, and in all his works and ways. He is just, but his justice is not unmerciful, neither does it, in any way, conflict with his mercy. It is not mercy, but weakness and injustice, that would refuse to execute a salutary, just, and merciful law.

I know it is frequently said, that the law knows no mercy; and it is sometimes true of the laws of man; for they are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. But I tell you the law of God is like its author, full of mercy and good fruits; and it is not less a dictate of *mercy than of justice*, that it should be executed. When

the law was made, the darling attribute was there, and mingled her tears of pity in the law; and she never can interfere with its execution without becoming weak and unjust.

Again, the common doctrine of pardon, or forgiveness, is opposed to the plainest and most positive declarations of Scripture. The Scriptures, from the beginning to the end, afford not the least possible encouragement for any man to hope that he can sin with impunity. On the other hand, it is plainly and most emphatically taught, that "every man shall receive according to his works," and not according as he may happen to be pardoned or not. "He that doeth wrong shall receive of the Lord for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." Such is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures; and I have before shown that these threatenings are made without the least shadow of a proviso whatever. I need not, therefore, go over that ground again. I lay it down as a thing proved, by Scripture, reason, and experience, that every man shall be punished for his sins; and as the common doctrine would deny this fact, and offer an easy escape from the punishment of sin, I have a right to presume "a priori," that it is false.

But how, you ask, can it be true, that men are both punished and pardoned? I must remark, before I give the answer, that it is as much your business to answer that question as mine; for it is not an objection aimed at me alone, but it strikes at the veracity of the word of the Lord. It is not my word alone, which says that men may be both punished and pardoned; and hence it is not alone incumbent on me to explain the matter. Here is the word of the testimony. It says, explicitly, that the iniquity of Jerusalem was pardoned; and yet it declares, with equal plainness, that she had been pun-

ished for all her sins. It is, therefore, not less the duty of the objector, than it is my duty, to explain how these things can be.

The great error of modern professors, upon this subject, originates in the fact, that they do not distinguish between sin itself, and the punishment of sin. We read much in the Bible of the "pardon," "remission," "forgiveness," "blotting out," and "taking away," of sin; and these terms all mean one and the same thing. Now, I wish you to observe, particularly, that it is *sin itself*, and not the punishment of sin, which is said to be "taken away," "blotted out," "forgiven," "pardoned," or "remitted." We are taught in scripture that God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Hence we are taught to pray for the forgiveness of sin, not for release from its punishment.

Hence also Solomon prayed God to forgive his people all their sins; but we do not find him praying for their escape from the punishment of their sins. Let the hearer keep this distinction constantly in view; let him withdraw his attention from punishment entirely, and fix the mind upon that "evil and bitter thing," sin itself, as the evil from which Jesus came to save the world, and remember that this is the accursed thing that needs to be forgiven, pardoned, blotted out, or taken away.

Further light may be thrown upon our subject by a moment's attention to the original meaning of the word as it occurs in the language of scripture. The word, translated forgiveness, pardon, &c., is *aphesis*, from aphemi, which means "to dismiss, to liberate, to take away." But let me ask, to dismiss, to liberate, to take

away, what? The answer is, not punishment, but sin itself. To pardon sin is not to take away the punishment, but to remove the sin itself. Take a passage or two: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Here the same word occurs, in another form, which is rendered forgiveness, or pardon, and the passage would as well have been translated:—"Behold the Lamb of God which forgiveth the sin of the world." Again, Christ was sent to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bound." Now this deliverance, or setting at liberty, is the same as forgiveness or pardon; and, if you ask what he delivers the captives from, the answer is, not punishment, but from the galling chains of sin. Hence it is that, in the Old Testament, God is represented as saying that, in the New Covenant, he would cause it to come to pass that "all should know the Lord from the least even to the greatest, and he would be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities would he remember no more." This is pardon, or the taking away of sin. The man, who is pardoned, has his sins removed—he becomes an obedient son of God, and his sins and iniquities are remembered against him no more, so that he stands before God in the same condition as if he had not sinned at all.

Should it be urged that this is admitting an escape from punishment, I answer, by no means; but it is making punishment what it is represented to be in the text, the means of bringing about a pardon or a removal of sin. I have before shown that the object of punishment is to put away sin, and secure obedience. Justice is not vindictive. It seeks obedience alone, and when the sinner becomes obedient, the end of justice is *answered;* and, whether the punishment has been little

or great, it is a *just* punishment; for justice can never inflict another stripe after obedience, the great end of justice, is secured; and hence you will see that pardon is consummated precisely where just punishment ends. It was, therefore, perfectly consistent for Isaiah to say that the iniquity of Jerusalem was pardoned, because she had received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

It is not improbable that these views may be, to many of my hearers, new; and, for that reason, though I have endeavoured to be as explicit as possible, I may not yet be fully understood. I shall, therefore, beg your attention while I illustrate a little further. Take along with you these two principles. 1. Justice requires all men to be obedient. 2. Pardon, or forgiveness, is the removal of sin. With these principles in view we will take a single case, and by that we will illustrate our subject. It shall be the case of Saul of Tarsus, of whose forgiveness, I presume, there will be no doubt. He was a most violent and bitter enemy of the cross of Christ, and he persecuted the Christians with the most unrelenting cruelty. In the full tide of his mad career, he was arrested and converted to Christ. He became a willing and obedient subject of the Redeemer's kingdom. He is no longer a persecutor, for his persecuting spirit is taken away, and the sin of persecution is blotted out, to be remembered against him no more for ever. This removal of the persecuting spirit, and this blotting out of the sin of persecution, is forgiveness, pardon, or remission of sin, by whichever name you are pleased to call it. That point, I presume, the hearer distinctly understands. Yes, you say, you fully understand that matter. You see, well enough, how he was pardoned; but you *do not see how* the speaker can say that he was [illegible]

punished, according to the demands of justice. True, he must have suffered intensely, for a short time, for he was struck to the earth, and was made blind. But, then, he was a persecutor, and he pursued the victims of his persecuting rage even unto strange cities; and you cannot perceive how the speaker can think that this was a just punishment.

I will, with your leave, attempt an explanation of that matter. And first, I will observe, that I have no doubt, if a man in the practice of crime, should be smitten down, in the streets of this city, by power from on high, and be taken up blind, we should hear it mentioned in every pulpit here as a signal display of the divine justice. But let this pass. The question is, why do I conceive that Saul was punished as much as justice required? The answer is, for the good reason that the punishment was effectual in securing the end of justice. The only object of punishing, at all, was to make him obedient, and when he became obedient, the end of justice was fully answered, and it had no more claims upon him. I grant you that, in this case, the end was speedily secured; and I grant, also, that another man might have deserved a much more severe chastisement; that is, it would have taken more to have humbled him to obedience, and, in such a case, a far more severe punishment would have been just. But, in his case, his reformation came speedily about; and, when that was effected, it would have been wrong to chasten him more. The idea that I wish to fix in your minds is this: There is no rule which says that every degree of guilt, shall have such or such a quantum of punishment, without reference to its effect, for that would be retaliation, and not justice. But the rule is this:—Justice claims obedience, and requires precisely as

much punishment as is necessary to secure that end, no more nor less. When that obedience is secured, whether by ten stripes nor ten thousand, justice is satisfied, and equally well satisfied with the ten, as with the ten thousand, for the sin is removed and a just God will remember it no more.

Suppose you should take your objection to the Saviour, and say to him, Lord, thou didst not punish Saul of Tarsus enough. He was an abominable persecutor, and thou oughtest in justice, to have scourged him more severely. I pray thee Lord give him a just punishment. Methinks, I hear the reply from a just and merciful Redeemer. Poor child of weakness, what do you know of my justice? Think you I would seek revenge as you would of an enemy? I saw Saul of Tarsus, and verily it was hard for him to kick against the pricks, but it was not hard for me. My only object was to make him obedient. I smote him, and he fell prostrate before me, and said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do." My justice was satisfied, and I took away his sin.

I may observe further, that though this may be a new view of justice in God, yet it is a kind of justice upon which you all practise. Go into your families, and look how it is there. Suppose one of your children transgresses, and anon another is found following the pernicious way. You take the first and scourge him. For what? Not for your own pleasure, but for his profit, that he may become an obedient child. You give him, say five stripes; but he is stubborn, and it is not until he has received twenty, that he submits. Your sense of justice is satisfied the moment he submits and you forgive him; you remember his sin no more against him. You now take the second child in hand, who is guilty of precisely the same crime as the other. You inflict

upon him five stripes, and by that he is humbled to submission, and you forgive him. Now the point to which I direct your attention, is, that in both of these instances the punishment was just, and in both the sin was blotted out. In the one case, the end of justice was obtained by five stripes, and in the other by twenty, but in both, the claims of justice were fully satisfied, because its end was attained. Should some one tell you, that you had not punished the last as much as the first, and that you ought to punish him more—you would reply at once, that your justice was not vindictive. You was not seeking revenge of your child, but you seek only reformation, and when that is accomplished your sense of justice is satisfied, and you can freely forgive.

Precisely in this light, I look upon the government of God. He is good, immensely good, and whether he sweetly invites by the tenderness of his mercy, or in the sterner features of justice he smites in the equity of judgement, he is equally good; and when reformation is effected, whether by one or a thousand stripes, his justice is satisfied and he freely forgives. *That* forgiveness however, is not an omission of punishment, for the punishment has already been inflicted, and has wrought its desired end. The sin is blotted out, and is remembered no more. In this light, therefore, you may see that forgiveness, so far from being opposed to the idea of a just punishment, is frequently brought about by the punishment itself.

I have already detained you beyond the time usually allotted to a discourse; and yet I must beg leave once more, to warn you against that most pernicious of all errors, which promises an easy escape from the punish*ment of sin.* Terrible and certain are the scourgings of *guilt, and I* pray you, be not deceived, for "There is n

ss nor shadow of death where the workers of
y may hide themselves, for the Lord will not lay
ıan more than is right." Let the young and in-
ːnced take warning, and beware, for there is a
at judgeth in the earth, and all hope of escape
ıe misery of sin is vain. No matter from what
it may come. Should it come from the pulpit
the imposing name of forgiveness or pardon, or
l from the deceitful workings of a vain imagi-
; in either case it is but the whispering of the
ːrous serpent, false as perjury, and deceitful as
lf. The Lord God Almighty has spoken, and
ːked shall not go unpunished.

# SERMON VII.

## DURATION OF PUNISHMENT.

"For I will not contend for ever: neither will I be always wroth; for spirit should fall before me, and the souls which I have made."

Isaiah lvii. 1

In my former discourses, I have spoken at large up the object, the justice, and the certainty, of punishmei and it is my purpose, at this time, to discuss the qu tion of its *duration*. I take up this matter, becaus is a point in which we materially differ from nearly other denominations of professing Christians; and I anxious to lay before you, in as clear a manner as pos ble, the reasons of our dissent from the general voice the modern church upon this subject.

The popular sentiment is, that we are, in this wor probationers for eternity, and that the punishment sin is reserved to another world, and will be endless duration. *Our* views are widely different from th We do not believe there is the least possible scriptu authority for saying that man is placed in this world a probationer for another; and we are confident the e perience of every man will prove the truth of th scripture which saith: "There *is* no peace to the wic ed." The very fact that the sinner is, *in a measu* punished in this world, proves that, instead of being probation, it is, in truth, a state of retribution.

Whether a full and complete punishment for all sin *inflicted on* every man, in this state of existence,

whether there is a limited punishment, in the future world, is a subject on which Universalists, both clergymen and laymen, differ in opinion. Some believe that all punishment is confined to this world; and others that it will extend into the future. In this, however, they all agree: that punishment will come to an end, and can in no case be endless. Candor compels me to say that, for myself, as an individual, I have not sufficient evidence to convince me, beyond a doubt, that there is any sin or punishment beyond the grave. I do not believe that the scriptures teach the doctrine of future punishment at all; and, yet, I would not very positively affirm, that all punishment is confined to this life. In favour of future punishment there are some plausible arguments, which may be drawn from reason and analogy; and as a philosophical speculation, I would not strongly object to that doctrine. Indeed, if I were allowed to deduce my principles from the philosophy of mind, and from *analogy*, I should, most probably, believe in the sentiment. But my view of the matter is this:—Neither reason nor philosophy, could discover the fact of a future existence, unless aided by revelation. It is by the light of revelation alone, that we can discover the existence of a future state. Consequently, all we know of the circumstances or condition of man, in that future state, we must learn from revelation also. Now a man may reason acutely upon that subject, and he may draw his conclusions with great plausibility, in favour of future punishment, and when he has done, I have only to say to him:—Sir, you reason very well, and your arguments are plausible; it may all be true, but I do not find it in the Bible, and therefore I cannot make it an article of my faith.

I have no doubt that there are many true things

which are not in the Bible, and for aught I know, this doctrine may be true; and if you hold it as a *philosophical opinion* of your own, I will not object. But when you come to say that it is a doctrine of revelation, I am bound by my convictions of truth, to say, I have not so read my Bible. But upon this point I will not dwell, for it is one of minor importance compared with the great principle in which we all agree, that punishment, whether inflicted here or hereafter, is designed for the good of the punished, and will end in the subjugation of all things to God. This is the great point at issue between us and our opposers, and it is this that shall be the subject of our present discussion.

From what I have said in my previous discourses upon the nature and intent of punishment, you will have concluded that I cannot allow it to be endless. If, as I have shown, punishment is in its nature remedial, and its object the reformation of the offender, then evidently it cannot be endless, for in that case it would defeat its own object.

Again, if, as I have contended, the right to punish orginates in the fact, that sin is an evil, which punishment is designed to cure, then evidently a just punishment cannot be endless; for in that case the punishment would be worse than the evil it was intended to remedy, and would of course be wrong in principle and practice.

Again, if, as I have said, punishment is founded upon the principle of goodness, rather than that of revenge, then of course it must end, otherwise it could do no good.

Still once more: if punishment is inflicted by a merciful God, for the benevolent purpose of enforcing obedience to salutary laws, then an endless punishment becomes a solecism, an absolute contradiction in terms.

We might properly talk of endless revenge, or endless wrath; but to speak of an endless punishment, is as absurd as it would be to speak of an endless month or an endless hour. We may properly say a severe punishment, or a just punishment, but the moment you add the idea of endless duration to punishment, it is stripped of all those characteristics that give it the nature of punishment; and it is, in fact, no longer punishment, but dark and cruel revenge.

Besides, if I was right, and if the Bible is right, in saying that every man shall receive the reward of his doings; then punishment cannot be endless, because all have sinned, and, in that case, all must suffer an endless infliction of punishment. But not to insist upon these points, I will proceed to give you some other reasons for rejecting the doctrine of the endless duration of punishment. I reject it,

I. Because it is useless, and I have no idea that an infinitely wise God would do a useless thing.

The infliction of endless woe upon a portion of the human family, could never benefit any being in the universe. Let us examine a moment, and see if we are correct in this position. Suppose I were to take you, in imagination, forward to the future world. I would lead you down to the brink of that dismal hell, in which men believe; and as you gazed upon its dark waves of liquid fire, rolling and dashing its shore, "mixed with the damned, like pebbles," and listened to the hideous groans and yells of despair, rising upon the sulphurous vapour that ascends and mingles with the songs of the redeemed, and the incense from the altar of heaven, I would ask you, what good would result from all this world of torment? Will it do God any good? Nay; for he is infinitely above being benefited, even by the

happiness of his creatures; much less can their sufferings make him more happy, or render more secure the stable foundations of his throne. Will it do the angels of heaven any good? No; for there is joy in heaven, among the angels, when one sinner repenteth and turneth to God. How, then, can they be rendered happy by the sins, the curses, and the blasphemies of hell? Will it do the saints in glory any good? Nay; for their felicity is perfect; and to say that their joys will be increased by the sufferings of their brethren, is to transform them into demons of cruelty. Will it do the sufferers themselves any good? No; for it is to be endless, and it cannot, of course make them, at any future time, either better or happier. Well, will it do even the fabled devils themselves any good? Nay; for we are told that their case is as hopeless as that of the souls of the damned. I ask, then, *Cui bono?* In the name of reason, what good do you expect to result from these untold miseries? And I say, no man ever has, and I may safely assert that no man ever will, answer that question.

I insist, then, that the thing is useless, in the broadest sense of the term; for neitherGod nor man, saints nor angels, wicked men nor devils, can reap either pleasure, profit, or advantage, from it. But it is not merely useless in itself, for the *belief of it* is equally useless. Who on earth was ever made happier by believing that half the world must suffer indescribable and endless torments? Is the mourner comforted, the widow or the orphan made to rejoice, the poor supported, the sick and afflicted strengthened, or the dying cheered, by faith in a burning hell? Nay; but it wrings many hearts with anguish, and mingles the bitterest dregs in the cup of sorrow.

*I may be told*, perhaps, that it is not pretended that

this is a happifying doctrine; but it claims to have a most salutary moral influence. But I deny this position entirely, and I give it you as the sober conviction of my judgment, that no man on earth was ever made *better* by such a faith. The Saviour laid the foundation of all Christian virtue in love to God, to be rendered with the whole heart, and to our neighbour as ourselves. I appeal to you, if there is not a most palpable absurdity in the thought, that a man should be brought to love God through fear of hell, or that he should love his neighbour because he believed that neighbour would be damned. The truth is, the influence of this faith, so far as it has any moral influence, is in the opposite side of the scale. The man who believes that God sustains such a character, that he will, for no purpose, unless it be to gratify a malignant spirit of revenge, torture the helpless creatures of his creation and power, through the ages of eternity, will find it difficult to love him with the whole heart. But if he should love God, it is natural to suppose that he would partake of his spirit; and if he believed that God hated his neighbour, it would be natural for him to hate him also; and the more cordially he hated him, the more would he be like his God.

I appeal to the history of the church, and it shall bear me witness, that effects similar to what the above principles would lead us to anticipate, have followed this sentiment in every age. Tertullian, in the third century, was the first man, of whom we have any account, who asserted the strict eternity of the punishment of the wicked; and that he partook largely of its spirit, is evident from the fact, that he exulted in the prospect of the sufferings of his fellows, and said he should "triumph and laugh," and rejoice, as he saw the Gentiles writhing *in hell.*

In the dark ages, this doctrine prevailed, and every persecutor who raised the axe or lighted the faggot, found his excuse in the assertion, that *eternal consequences* were at stake, and it was better that he should burn the body, than that God should burn the *soul* in an endless fire. Its footsteps, in every age, have been marked with the blood of victims immolated upon its altars, and now, all reeking with gore, it has the audacity to come down to us, and claim to be the peaceable and moralizing doctrine of the benevolent and compassionate Son of God. But I object to the sentiment in question,

II. Because it is unmerciful and unjust.

That there is no mercy in it, is most perfectly evident, even to the superficial observer; for it says, expressly, that not one ray of mercy, or of hope, can ever gleam upon the darkness and despair of hell; and though the miserable sufferers shall plead with groans and cries, enough to melt the solid rock, for some mitigation of their torments, yet their cries will die away in the dismal caverns of their prison, and God's ear will not hear, nor his hand grant them a moment's respite or alleviation. There is no mercy in such a doctrine, and though men may dignify it with the name of *justice*, or give it any other soft name, it is no more nor less than cruelty, unmingled and unmitigated cruelty, red as blood and black as hell, without one redeeming ray of pity, mercy, or justice, to relieve its sombre shadowings.

But we shall be told, that God is just, as well as merciful, and that his justice requires the endless sufferings of sinners. I know that God is just, and for *that very reason*, the doctrine cannot be true, for it subverts the very foundations of justice. Pray, tell me what does justice require? I answer for you:—it requires all men

to love, serve, and obey God. He says, to one and all, "My son, give me thine heart." He claims the affections and the obedience of all. May I ask if that is a just claim, or an unjust one? Has God a just right to the obedience and affections of man—of every man? or does he claim something that is not properly his? If his claim is just, you can see, as well as your speaker, where *justice will lead you.* It would give to God, the great Father of all, the obedience of a world; and its claims will never be answered until all hearts are his, and all knees bow to him.

But you say some men will not obey, nor love God as they ought. Granted. But what then? Must God connive at their injustice, and put them in a place where they can never, by any possibility, render him that obedience which is his? And will these two wrongs make one right, think you? I lay the axe here at the root of the plea for endless misery, which is raised upon the justice of God. I go back to the foundation of all justice. I commence with the claims of heaven upon man. God claims the obedience of the world, and that claim is founded upon the first and immutable principles of justice. For this reason, and for this alone, God has a right to punish men for their sins. If God had no right to the obedience of men, he could have no right to punish them for their disobedience.

The right to punish, then, is founded upon God's *previous right* to obedience, and must always be subservient to it. It is, therefore, again evident, that the object of punishment is not to simply do justice to man, but to compel him to do justice to himself and his God. When man transgresses, he does an act of injustice. In the strong language of the sacred penman, "he robs God." Now, the object of punishment is to compel him to do

justice, to serve God as he ought. Hence it is evident that justice must for ever forbid the infliction of any punishment which would defeat this object, as it forbade the injustice of the transgression in the outset.

Look at it in another light. The doctrine is, that in hell men will transgress the laws of God through all eternity, and then the matter will stand thus:—When man sins he does an act of injustice to God—he commits robbery upon high heaven. For this cause, God places him in hell, where he is compelled to sin eternally; and so by an eternal series of sins, he seeks to satisfy the demands of that same justice which was outraged by the same acts in the first instance!!

Singular justice this! About such justice as would be exercised in punishing a man who had committed one act of robbery, by compelling him to rob every man he meets. As if it was not enough that man had trampled upon God's justice in this world, by his crimes, but in the next he must needs be apprenticed to the devil, and taught to bid stout defiance to the claims of justice through a long eternity. And this is justice! And this the course pursued by an infinitely wise God, to enforce the demands of that justice which saith, "Thou shalt worship and serve the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve!!!" The thought is too absurd to need any other refutation than the mere statement of it in its true colors.

Talk of justice with an endless hell before you, where countless millions mourn, and curse and blaspheme and trample under foot every principle of justice, for ever and ever! You might as well talk of justice in Saul of Tarsus, when he "breathed out threatening and slaughter, *and compelled* men to blaspheme," or ye might as *well look* for it in the dungeons of the Inquisition, where

torturing racks and engines of torment were plied to compel men to violate their consciences and sin against God. Justice is no child of hell, whose residence is in the dark dominions of sin and Satan. Her origin is in heaven, she is the first-born of the eternal, and her residence is in those bright and peaceful realms where God is obeyed, and all hearts render unto him that which is most justly his, all honor and blessing, thanksgiving and glory for ever and ever!

I repeat again, justice requires the obedience of all men; all her acts are subservient to this, and justice will never be done till a world of intelligences is brought to love, serve and obey that God whose they are, and on whom they all depend. The doctrine of the endless duration of punishment, denies that man will ever render to God the homage and service which is his due. It compels men to blaspheme, and crimsons the altar of justice with the blood of cruelty and revenge. It is, therefore unjust and consequently cannot be true.

There is another view of the subject, in which the injustice of the doctrine is apparent. One of the plainest principles of justice is that which requires that there should be some proportion between crime and its punishment. Hence a sentiment which annexes an infinite punishment to the crimes of a finite being, violates one of the first and clearest principles of justice, human and divine. Much more I might say upon this point—less I could not say. I have merely thrown out these hints upon which you will do well to reflect at your leisure.

To me it is a matter of unspeakable joy, that God is just, for I hail that fact as the certain pledge, that all crime, rebellion and injustice must one day cease.

I object to the doctrine of the endless duration of *punishment,*

III. Because it is unscriptural.

This is with me an insuperable barrier to a belief that sentiment. I could receive a doctrine against wh there were some *apparent* objections, if I found in favor a "Thus saith the Lord." But when I find a d trine in itself unreasonable, unjust, cruel and usel and have added to this, the clear testimony of script against it, I cannot receive it. Why the very langu of my text, if there was not another passage in Bible of the like import, would render it a hopeless t to make the endless duration of punishment harmon with scripture. "I will not contend for ever, neit will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail bef me and the souls that I have made." How can the d trine of interminable and unquenchable wrath be m to harmonize, for a moment, with such a passage as t Does not the doctrine assert, that the wrath of God v abide upon the damned in hell as long as God hims exists, and that he will never cease to contend agai them? And does not the text, as if on purpose to c tradict such a sentiment, expressly and most emph cally declare, that "he will not be always wroth, neit will he contend for ever!"

I need not pause here to give you a long explanat of the term wrath as applied to God. "Anger rest in the bosom of fools," and as God is wise, we can suppose for a moment, that he harbors such a feeling we call anger in man. He scourges men for their s and speaking according to man's views of things, h said to be angry; but it is a remarkable circumsta that wherever the anger of God is mentioned in Bible. it is represented as being but momentary, wher his mercy is as uniformly said "to endure through *generations.*" "In a little wrath, I hid my face fr

thee for a small moment, but with everlasting kindness will I revisit thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." "Sing unto the Lord, oh! ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, for his anger endureth but a moment, in his favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." "I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep my anger for ever."

These are the uniform teachings of the scriptures in regard to the duration of what they call the "anger of the Lord." But how differently do they speak of his mercy! "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." "Thy mercy, oh! Lord endureth for ever; let the redeemed of the Lord say so, for his mercy endureth for ever." In these passages you will discover the truth of our position, that the anger of the Lord is set forth as being but momentary, while his mercy is enduring as his own throne. I say, therefore, that a doctrine which reverses this principle, which limits the mercy of God to a fragment of time, and makes his anger endure through all eternity, is most clearly and incontrovertibly unscriptural. The Bible says, "God's mercy endureth for ever;" but this doctrine asserts that the time will soon come when the mercy of God shall be clear gone for ever. The Bible asserts that "the anger of the Lord endureth but a moment," and that "he will not cast off for ever;" but this doctrine affirms that he will cast off for ever, and that his merciless anger shall abide world without end.

The hearer may tell me that we read much in the Bible about an everlasting punishment, and it must be

endless, else such a term would not be applied to it. I grant that you may have read of an everlasting punishment in the Bible, but I apprehend you have not read *as much* about it as you imagine. There is but one solitary instance in the Bible where the term "everlasting" is applied to punishment, and that is in Mathew, xxv. 46. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." That is the only passage in the sacred book where the phrase "everlasting punishment" occurs. But even if the phrase occurred a thousand times, it would avail nothing in the case, for no honest and just mode of interpretation would allow such a construction of that phrase, as to make it contradict those other and numerous declarations of the limited duration of all that bears the name of anger in God. Besides the term "everlasting" is *not* used in scripture to denote a strictly endless duration.

The priesthood of Aaron was called an "everlasting priesthood." The possession of Canaan, by the Israelites, was called an "everlasting possession," and many other things are called "everlasting," which we know have long since come to an end. Such being the use of the word in the Old Testament, it is but reasonable to suppose that it is used in the same sense in the New, and no good or plausible reason can be given, why our Saviour should mean more by the term than Moses and the Prophets meant by it. Besides if you are not acquainted with the original language of the scriptures, go and consult those who are, and I care not what their creeds may be, if they are honest men, they will tell you that the word which is translated "everlasting" in that passage is exceedingly ambiguous; that it means a long *and indefinite* period of time, and that the precise length *of time intended* by it can never be ascertained by th

word itself, but must in all cases be determined by the nature of the subject to which it is applied. With this principle in view, which was never disputed to my knowledge, it appears to me that a candid and ingenuous mind more intent on learning truth than supporting a favorite creed, would reason thus:—I find here a word applied to punishment which is ambiguous; it may mean an endless duration, or it may not; and this must be determined by the nature of the subject. Now in this case, the *subject* is punishment, a thing which from its very nature must be limited in duration, and which, in the Old Testament, we are often told, can endure comparatively for a moment only. Hence I conclude, that the word, in this instance, must be used in the same limited sense, in which it is used in the Old Testament.

Thus candor would reason; but bigotry has for years been clinging with the grasp of death to the cruel dogma of endless punishment, and alleging this word as its proof; reluctantly confessing, at the same time, that it does not imply *necessarily*, an endless duration. It is in vain, she is told, that the word is often used in a limited sense; that punishment becomes revenge, and not punishment, as soon as it is made endless. In vain, is she told, that utility, mercy, justice, and reason; nay, even God himself, in his holy word, forbids the infliction of endless wo; she has no head to reason, no heart to feel, and she perseveres in her reckless determination to immolate the multitude of the human race upon her altar of cruelty, blasphemously dedicated to a God of justice.

From all that I have said, the conclusion is inevitable, that the duration of punishment must be limited. *It is not an end* in the divine government, but is em-

ployed as the *means* of securing a glorious and blessed result. The precise time of its continuance, no mortal man can tell, for that matter God has not revealed. Of this one thing, however, we may be certain—it will continue no longer than a wise and merciful God shall see that it is necessary for the good of its creatures. Its end shall at last be accomplished, all things shall be subdued unto God, and he shall be "all in all."

# SERMON VIII.

## JUDGEMENT.

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Matthew xvi. 27, 28.

THERE is not, perhaps, in the whole range of Christian theology, a subject more worthy of our attention than the doctrine of judgement. That man is an accountable being, and that God will reward us for our virtues and punish us for our vices, are truths that cannot be disputed by any man who believes the Bible. But *when* is the world to be judged, and what are the rewards and punishments which God awards to the virtuous and vicious, are questions upon which there is a wide difference of opinion. On one hand it is believed that the throne of judgement is erected *in the earth*, and that men stand before the bar of the judge of all *here*, *in time*. On the other hand it is thought, that men are probationers for eternity, that justice and judgement are not executed on earth, but are reserved to a great and fearful day beyond death, and the resurrection, when slumbering justice shall arise and slay her thousands, and mete out endless rewards and punishments to those who stand at her bar. While I avow myself as an advocate of the former of these opinions, I shall endeavor fairly to state, and candidly illustrate the latter.

*By some unaccountable* means the opinion has obtain-

ed, that we, as a denomination, deny the accountability of man altogether, and discard entirely the idea that man is to be judged for his works. It therefore becomes a duty, which I owe to myself, and the cause of truth, to state, in the outset, that this is a gross mistake. None believe, more fully than we do, in the accountability of man, and none maintain with more constancy the great truth, that "the Lord is our Judge," and that he will reward every man according to his works. Let it therefore be distinctly understood, that the question at issue, is, not whether men are accountable beings; but whether their accounts are to remain unsettled till another world. It is not, whether men are to be judged at all; but whether their judgement shall linger to another world?

The doctrine of a day of future judgement, prevails so generally, and is deemed so important, that I shall feel myself warranted, in giving it a somewhat thorough and searching examination.

The judgement-scene has been a favorite theme with those who appear more intent on exciting the passions and alarming the fears, than enlightening the understanding. We have often heard the most vivid and glowing descriptions of the horrors of that dreadful day when a universe shall stand at the bar of God, and receive that dread sentence from which there is no appeal; and we have been exhorted to speak every word, think every thought, and perform every act, in reference to that tremendous day, for which all other days were made. There, it is supposed, every thought, word and act, will be brought into the account; and for this reason, it is thought to be the best safeguard of virtue's most holy cause, and to interpose the most salutary restraint upon the workings of the spirit of disobedience.

I doubt not that there are many sincere and honest minds who really believe, that the rejection of this doctrine would greatly endanger the public morals, and it is but just, that I should view it for a moment in that light.

If we were to appeal to facts, they would give no very favorable comment upon the moralizing influence of the doctrine in question. Every persecutor that has ever lived, has acted, as he said, in full view of his responsibility, and with a full determination to stand acquitted in the great day of judgement. Instead of staying the murderous hand, it has armed it with daggers and strengthened it in the work of death. In Spain it reared an Inquisition, and murdered more than half a million human beings. In our own country it whipped the Baptists, and hung the witches and the Quakers; for be it remembered, that all these enormities were committed by those who believed in the doctrine in question, and they, every one of them, plead as their excuse, the fact of their accountability to God, and their ardent desire to stand acquitted in the great day of judgement. These are facts, written for our instruction and admonition on the pages of history, and they certainly give us no very strong evidence of the power of this doctrine to cultivate and cherish the mild, tender, and peaceable spirit of the Gospel.

Besides all this, if you will look around you, you will see daily in this city, and all others, men who believe in this doctrine, rushing into the depths of sin notwithstanding their faith. The reason is obvious. Men always act under the influence of present motives, or those that are near at hand. Parents could never maintain family government by teaching their children, that *they would reckon* with them at the age of forty, and

reward or punish them at a subsequent period. No civil government could exist and maintain its laws for a single year, by acting upon the principle that it would only, for the present, look on and mark down crimes to be punished twenty years from date. And if a law, whose penalty was deferred for the short space of twenty years, would be but a dead letter; need we wonder that men should transgress the laws of God, when they are taught that its penalty is removed far beyond the line that divides time from eternity?

The fact is, when a man is about to commit an act, he does not pause to consider what will be the remote and possible consequences, some hundreds or thousand years hence; but he looks to the effects which, to him, are present, certain and tangible. When the thief is tempted to steal, I care not how strongly he may believe in a day of future judgement, I will venture to say, that he thinks more of the present benefits of the property, than of a future heaven, and is far more solicitous to conceal his crime and escape the State's prison, than to avoid the judgement. No man commits a crime, under a full conviction that he will be speedily and certainly punished. It is putting far away the evil day, and a hope of escape, that encourages men on in sin. Most unhappily, the doctrine under consideration is exactly calculated to foster these delusive hopes. The sinner is assured, in the outset, that he can contract debts to any amount at the bar of justice; and get credited to the future world; and worse than this, that he can at any time previous to death, take the benefit of an insolvent act, under the name of repentance, and cheat justice out of the whole debt. Such views can *never reform* the vicious, nor restrain the spirit of sin. *Men must know*, that the eye of the Lord is continually

upon them, and that their judgement of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not, but in the day they partake of the forbidden fruit, even in *that very day*, they shall die, and that inevitably.

But I leave this view of the doctrine, and pass to offer you some reasons which, in my mind, forbid the idea of the truth of this doctrine.

I. It is like the doctrine of endless misery, a useless doctrine.

The belief of it, as I have already shown, does no good, but much positive injury, and the thing itself is as utterly useless, as faith in its existence. What saith the Scriptures upon the subject of judgement? "Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth." "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in *the earth*, much more the wicked and the sinner." Now, if it be a fact, that God judges in the earth, and recompenses both the righteous and the wicked, you can but perceive that a day of future judgement, to judge and recompense them again, is utterly useless.

But the doctrine is not only useless in fact; it is equally so when viewed in reference to the opinions of its advocates. So far as I understand the opinions of those who maintain this sentiment, they uniformly agree that man has an immortal soul, which survives the shock of death, and lives for ever. With the exception of the Catholics, they also believe, that at the article of death, this soul sinks to hell or rises to heaven, and its fate is fixed for eternity, and it cannot be altered. Now, if this be true, pray where is the utility of this day of judgement?

If a sinner died in the days of Adam, according to the popular doctrine he went immediately to hell, and his case was fixed for eternity. Now, suppose one thousand *years from this* time the judgement-day should arrive,

and that man should be brought up to be judged. You will at once perceive that he will have been in hell near seven thousand years, before judgement is pronounced upon him. But what good will a trial do him at that late hour? Will it alter his condition? By no means, for we are before informed that his state is fixed for eternity. If so, then this *form* of a trial and judgement is a perfect mockery, as much so as it would be to disinter a man who had been executed for murder without judge or jury twenty years since, and give him a trial, and pass sentence upon him.

In no way can I discover any utility in the thing, unless you turn Catholic, and believe that souls are detained in purgatory until the judgement; and *even then* it would not seem perfectly just to detain a man, in some cases thousands of years, without a trial. I have no fellowship or communion at all with a principle which would first hang a man, and then judge him; and I hold the common doctrine of a day of future judgement, when viewed in the connexion I have named, as a perfect practice upon that principle, and of course not only useless, but unjust and abominable.

I know it is said, that this judgement is necessary, to vindicate the ways of God to man, and affords an opportunity for God to show to an assembled universe, that he is a God of justice. But to me this looks like the veriest subterfuge to cover a retreat from an absurd and indefensible position. In this case, it is no longer *man* that is judged, but it is an occasion where short-sighted man sits as the judge upon the doings of God! Are we willing to admit, for a moment, that the ways of God are of so exceedingly doubtful a character that he must needs assemble the universe in order to vindicate himself from the suspicion of having done injustice to his

creatures? The very thought is akin to the worst of blasphemy, and the man who entertains a notion that he is one among the number of those to whom God will submit the decision of the question of the equity of his ways, has need of the caution, that he beware and not "raise himself above all that is called God on earth."

II. The second and greatest objection I have to the doctrine, is, that it is unscriptural.

I am free to admit, that the Scriptures speak not only of a day of judgement, but of *many* and different days of judgement; and that the writers of the New Testament speak of one of these days by way of eminence, as "*the* day of judgement." But if you examine the subject, you will find that all these days are in this world, and that it is men in the flesh, and not immortal spirits in the resurrection, that are to be judged. We hear much said about an awful day of judgement, *connected* with the *resurrection*, and coming after death, and I doubt not many suppose the Scriptures abound in such language. But if you will take the trouble to examine the Bible for that purpose, if you have never observed it before, you will be surprised to find how different is the language of Scripture from the usual mode of speaking upon that subject.

The fact that the world is to be judged in the righteousness of heaven's justice, is uniformly set forth by the inspired writers, as a matter of most lively joy. Thus the Psalmist says, "Oh! let the earth rejoice, and let the earth be glad, and shout for joy, *for the Lord is Judge.* Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh, he cometh *to judge* the earth with righteousness, and the people with equity." Very different,

indeed, is this from the terrors that are usually thrown around the judgement of God, in these latter days; and I can account for it in no other way, than upon the supposition, that the divine writers had very different views of the divine judgements from those that are now entertained.

Equally explicit are the Scriptures in relation to the *time* and *place* of judgement. "Verily he is a God that judgeth *in the earth;*" and "his judgements are abroad *in the earth;*" is the uniform word of the testimony, and you will for ever search the Bible in vain, for proof that he judges man any where else but in the earth, or at any period subsequent to his existence here. In no single instance in the Bible, is a judgement spoken of as connected with the resurrection from the dead, nor is it mentioned *at all*, as a thing which is to follow the death of the body. I have, indeed, heard men quote Scripture after this sort. "As the tree falls, so it lies; and as death leaves us, so judgement will find us." "For it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death, to come to judgement." These passages are doubtless very pertinent to the point, and but for one slight circumstance, would unquestionably prove that there is a judgement after the death of the body. There is one circumstance, however, which, though it may be trifling to some, is to me very important, and leads me to doubt the clearness and authority of the proof. I allude to the fact, that neither of these passages, so often and so confidently quoted, is in the Bible; but both of them are manufactured by men, to support their creeds.

The first is probably intended as a quotation from the 11th chapter of Ecclesiastes, where the preacher, in *speaking of* deeds of charity, says, "cast thy bread upon *the waters*, and after many days ye shall find it. Give

a portion to seven, and also to eight, for ye know not what evil there may be in the world: for if the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth, and if the tree fall toward the north, or toward the south, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." The other passage is an altered and garbled quotation of a part of Heb. ix. 27, where the Apostle says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgement, so Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." If you will compare the passage, as written by the Apostle, with the common quotation, you will find it materially different, and even our common translation fails of giving the true meaning of the original. For some reason unknown to me, our translators have left out one word, from the original, and have not translated it at all. I allude to the article before the word men, and I have no fear of contradiction, from any man who knows even the alphabet of the language, and has read the Greek Testament, when I say, that a faithful translation would be, "And as it is appointed unto *the* men (or *these men*) once to die, and after this the judgement," &c.

Appointed unto *these men* once to die. What men? Look at the preceding context, and you will find the answer. The Apostle was treating of the sacrificial death of the High Priests under the law, as a type of the death of Christ, and of the judgement of the children of Israel. Immediately following this typical death of the High Priest, and in this passage, he draws out the parallel between the two cases:—As it was appointed (in the Jewish law) unto these men once to die, (figuratively, for the sins of the people,) so Christ was once offered, to *bear the sins of* many; and as the High Priest came

forth from the holiest of holies, after his typical death, to judge the people and pronounce them clean, even so, should Christ come, not to condemn, but without sin, unto salvation. All this falls far short of asserting that there is to be a great day of general judgement subsequent to the death of the body; and I appeal to you, if the fact, that men are under the necessity of altering the passage, in order to make it answer their purpose, is not good proof, that it does not answer that purpose, as it stands even in our translation. When men can find a clear and explicit "Thus saith the Lord" for their sentiments, they will never make scripture to prove them. Inasmuch, therefore, as the scriptures nowhere mention a day of judgement, as connected with the resurrection of the dead, or as an event subsequent to death; but uniformly represent judgement as a matter executed in the earth, I maintain that the sentiment which removes it to another world, is most clearly unscriptural.

There is one additional circumstance to be named, and I shall proceed to give you what I suppose to be the true doctrine of judgement. In all countries it is deemed but just, that men should be tried by the laws they transgress, and in the same realm, where the offence is committed. Now the law of God, was given to man, for the regulation of his conduct, here on earth, and I aver most explicitly, and challenge contradiction, that there is no law in the Bible, which assures man, that the transgressor of its requirements shall be taken to another world to be judged for his transgression. On the contrary, all subsequent enactments, and practice, are in the spirit of the first prohibition, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam was judged in the cool of the evening of the very day he sinned,

and Cain was called to the bar of judgement while yet the blood of his brother was red, and warm upon his hands. So the law required, and hence I contend that to judge men in another world, for the sins of this, is unjust, because man was never made answerable to any such law.

If I remember aright, one of the grievances set forth in the declaration of American Independence, was, that citizens of the colonies were taken across the waters to a distant land to be tried for offences committed here. Now every American citizen is ready to condemn such a procedure, and will denounce the British government as unjust, oppressive, and tyrannical in so doing; and yet the great mass of them worship a God who transports men to another world, to be tried and judged for crimes committed in this, and in him they call it justice. I indulge a hope, that the time is not far distant, when men will discover that injustice and tyranny though in a God, would be injustice and tyranny still.

But I pass on; and come now to speak of the true scripture doctrine of judgement.

It is worthy of remark, that the doctrine of judgement as set forth in the Old Testament, and as found in the Gospel, are widely different; not indeed in principle, but in the mode of administration. In the Old Testament "God is the judge, lawgiver and king;" and in that dispensation he was the being who sat in the judgement seat. But in the New Testament, we learn that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son." Henceforth then we are to look upon Jesus Christ as the divinely appointed judge of all, and the question before us relates to the *time* and the *manner* of his judgement.

*The prophecies* of the Old Testament would lead us

to expect, that although the work of judgement has been given to the hands of the Son of God, yet it was to be executed, as it ever had been, in the earth. Thus Isaiah says, "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise a righteous branch unto David, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice, *in the earth*, and his name shall be called "the Lord our righteousness." In conformity with this, when he came, he announced himself as the judge of men, and there are two senses in which he may be said to be the judge.

In the first place, he came to execute upon the Jewish nation, those severe and extraordinary judgements, which had long since been threatened against them, and which were at that time near at hand. The prophets had warned the people, that the day was coming when Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, and they should be scattered a proverb and a by-word among all people, and the Saviour himself, had informed them, that upon them, should come all the righteous blood, that had been shed upon the earth, "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar." He told them, when looking at the glory of the temple, that the day was coming when there should not be left one stone upon another that should not be thrown down, and that there should be a time of trouble, such as had not been from the beginning of the world to that same time, no, nor ever should be, and that this day of sorrow should come upon them, as a thief in the night. "Then should all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they should see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and he should send his angels to gather together his

elect from the four winds of heaven," and they should dwell safely. He informed them moreover that though he knew not the *day* nor the *hour*, in which that judgement should come, yet he could inform them, that *that* "*generation* should not pass away till all these things should be fulfilled." Now Jesus was the executor of these judgements, and in this sense he was the judge of Israel. And as the day of this desolation was the day of the *most severe* judgement that ever befel Israel, or any other nation, therefore, it is called by way of eminence, above all other days of tribulation, "*The Day of Judgement.*" To this day, most of those passages allude, which speak of the day of judgement. To this he alludes in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where the nations are represented as being gathered before him, and separated from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, the Gentiles entering into that knowledge of God which is declared to be "life eternal," and the Jews going away into a state of perpetual chastisement, until the fulness of the Gentiles should be come in, and then all Israel should be saved.

But there is another, and a wider sense, in which he was judge. He came to establish a system of religion for the world, a kingdom which though purely spiritual in its nature, should embrace as its legitimate subjects, all the ends of the earth. In that kingdom, his laws were to be the rule of action, and his precepts the criterion by which the actions of men were to be judged. This kingdom was to endure through all subsequent time, and by its laws all men were to be tried and condemned and justified. In this sense he is the judge of all, and the day of the duration of that kingdom, is the day of judgement. In this sense, we all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, and give an account to him of every thought, word, and deed.

Do you ask for proof of this? I point you to the words of my text:—"For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." The hearer will perceive, that the coming of the Son of Man "in his kingdom," in the last part of the text, is used as synonymous with his coming "in the glory of his Father to reward every man according to his works," in the first, and they most indubitably refer to one and the same time.

If we inquire *when* that time should be, the text is clear and explicit upon that point:—"Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." There are numerous other passages, which might be quoted to the same effect, but for this, I have no time at present, and I deem this one fully sufficient to establish the point in hand. Men may talk as they will, about a future coming of Christ to judge the world and reward men according to their works. If there is any confidence to be placed in his own words, then it is settled that his coming to judgement, and to reward every man according to his works, was the very time when he came to establish his kingdom, and we have his explicit and positive assurance, that there were men living eighteen hundred years ago, who should not taste death till that event should occur.

I shall leave those who put far away this evil day, to settle that controversy as best they can, with the words of him who spake as never man spake, and said, "Behold *now* is the judgment of this world; *now* is the *prince of this* world cast out.

# SERMON IX.

## THE RESURRECTION.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
I Corinthians xv. 22.

The resurrection of the dead is the crowning excellency of the Gospel of Christ, so far as its doctrinal teachings are concerned. The views it gives of the character and government of God, are valuable, and worthy of being cherished in every heart; but *most precious* of all its holy and peace-giving truths, is that which points to another and a better world beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death, and assures us that there we shall live in the freshness of immortal youth while eternity endures.

So far as this doctrine in itself is concerned, I shall of course have no controversy in these lectures. In a work* already before the public, I have argued that point at length against the skeptic, and given my reasons for believing that man shall rise from the dead. Those reasons it is not now necessary to repeat, as I am not now arguing with the infidel. The resurrection from the dead is a doctrine in the belief of which nearly all christians agree, and I therefore take it for granted in this discussion, without pausing upon its evidences. But the *object* of the resurrection and the state and condition of those who shall be raised are subjects upon

* "An Argument for the Truth of Christianity."

which there is a wide difference of opinion between and the great mass of the christian world. Upon th points I must therefore, dwell at length.

I suppose no man would feel disposed to contend, t God will raise man from the dead without any des in so doing. It is contrary to all our ideas of God, an intelligent being, to suppose that he would raise n up from the dead for no purpose.

I suppose it will be admitted further, that the state condition of man in the resurrection must be depend entirely upon the will of God. Man was born to and I will, for the sake of illustration, suppose that the inhabitants of the earth are dead. Of all that n live and breathe, there is not a living soul left. They h all bowed before the destroyer, and their bodies h returned to the dust as they were.

Go now and gaze upon that great valley of dry bor and ask yourself, if man can do any thing toward m ing them live? You see at once, that he has no pov to make one hair black or white. Neither is God un any *obligations* to breathe into them the breath of l All ranks and conditions of men are there, and the k and the beggar are alike in this respect. They have been unprofitable servants, and not one among them done aught that can give him a claim upon a resurr tion. God might let them all sleep on, and sleep *for ever*, and his throne would be free from the cha of having done injustice to a single soul. It is cl therefore, that the resurrection from the dead must pend upon the free grace or *favour* of God; and if man is ever raised from the dead it will be because G in his goodness, saw fit to raise him.

*If, therefore*, we are dependent upon God's free gr *for the* resurrection from the dead, then of course

are dependent upon him for the state and condition in which we are to be raised. If we have done nothing to merit a resurrection at all, much less can we claim any thing at the hands of God, in regard to the circumstances of that resurrection which he gives us.

This then is the sum of the matter:—When a man dies, no matter who he may be, it is for God to say, whether he shall live again; and having decided, that he will raise him from the dead, it is for God, and God alone, to say what shall be his condition; and man has in justice, no right to a voice in that matter at all.

It is reasonable, however, as before hinted, to suppose that God would have some object in view, in raising man from the dead; and that object, whether good or bad, must depend entirely upon the nature of God. If he is a cruel being, delighting in misery, why then it is reasonable to suppose that he would raise man from the dead on purpose to torment him.

But if he is, what scripture and nature declare him to be, good, supremely and invariably good, then of course he can have no *bad* object in the resurrection. Such a being looking upon man sleeping quietly in the grave, would not be likely to disturb that sleep, unless some good was to be effected by it, for if he could not do man any further *good* he would be sure and not do him any harm. I come now to the direct inquiry into the state of man in the resurrection, as dependent entirely upon the will of God. There is one, and but one out of three possible answers to this query, that can be true.

First, God intends to raise all men from the dead, and make them miserable, or

Secondly, He intends to make a part miserable, and a part happy, or

*Thirdly, He intends to make them all happy.*

Now one of these three propositions must be true, for besides these there is no other possible answer; and it is equally certain, that but one of them can be true, for if either one is true, the others are false; and if two are proved false, the other must be true. Let us, therefore, with all candor and soberness examine and see which of these is true.

I. God intends to raise all men from the dead, and his object in so doing, is to render them all hopelessly and intolerably miserable.

Is there any need of my saying one word more than barely to state the proposition, in order to bring out from this congregation an unanimous expression of dissent from its truth? I am persuaded, that it is not, for there is no man among you, who would not agree with me in saying, that the admission of such a doctrine would rob God of every attribute that makes his character lovely, and transform him into a cruel and malicious fiend. What! God put forth the energies of his power, breathe upon the dry bones, and raise a world from the sleep of death, and confer upon them immortality for no other reason, than that he may torment them and make them all as miserable as their natures can endure! Away with the impious thought! It is a graceless libel upon the character of the God of all. To say nothing of scripture, all nature around us rises up and contradicts a sentiment so utterly at war with every just idea of a benevolent and good creator and governor.

There is much on earth calculated to render the sojourn of man here, not only comfortable, but positively happy. Much as is said about the miseries of the world, yet, if any man will examine his own system, and its nice *adaptation to* the circumstances that surround it, he will *find evidence* abundant and clear, that he was fashioned

by the hand of a good being, who took great care so to make him that he might be happy. The light of the sun, the air that we breathe, the fruits of the earth, the changes of the seasons, the silence of the night, the dews of heaven, and the waters that gush from the fountain are all precisely such as are calculated to minister to our comfort, and I might safely defy any man to lay his finger upon one of these arrangements of nature, which his wisdom could so alter as on the whole, to be a benefit to himself.

Now if God had made the earth in such a manner, as to render man necessarily and unavoidably miserable; if he had placed us on a barren rock, thirsting for water and given us none; or hungering for food, which the earth would not yield; if he had made our senses conducive to pain alone, our necessary food bitter, and water loathsome, and kept us all our life long in utter misery; why then we might have concluded that he was a malignant being, and having brought us into this world only to torment us, it was probable that he would raise us from the dead for a similar purpose. But when we look around us and behold how completely the reverse of this is the fact; when we see all nature pouring her treasures at our feet and inviting us to partake and be happy; then we feel that God is good, and the truth is forced irresistibly upon our minds, that the same God who has given us one life for a good object, will never give us another for a bad purpose. But I need not dwell here, for I presume there is no man in his senses who will contend that God intends to raise all men from the dead for the purpose of rendering them the subjects of perpetual and hopeless misery. I therefore pass on.

II. God intends to raise all men from the dead, for the *purpose of rendering* a part miserable and a part happy.

This position does not bear upon its face the glaring and palpable absurdity of the other, and yet, I apprehend that an examination of the matter will show you, that it is scarcely less opposed to reason and Scripture. There is something a little remarkable in the manner in which men look upon this subject. When I say that God will raise all men up and make them miserable, you start at it as a monstrous thing. You say it is an insult to the majesty of heaven, and that it charges God with the worst of cruelty. But when I say that he will raise them from the dead for the purpose of making a part miserable and a part happy, you call it a good doctrine, just as if the number of the miserable could affect the principle on which they are made so. The truth is, cruelty is cruelty, find it where you will, and whether it is exercised upon one or ten thousand, is of no manner of consequence, so far as the thing itself is concerned.

If a man has seven children, and burns them all alive in a furnace, you would call him a cruel wretch. But suppose he burned only four out of the seven, what would you call him then? You ought to call him a very good man, if you abide by the principle you adopt in religious matters. But no; you say, in this case, though he destroyed but four instead of seven children, he is not the less detestable on that account. So here, if it were cruel in God to raise all men up from the dead on purpose to torment them, then is it equally cruel to do so in the case of one single individual.

I must be allowed to illustrate this matter a little further, for it is a subject upon which men are slow of hearing. There are on earth, I suppose, about eight hundred millions of human beings. Of these only about two hundred millions are nominally Christians. That *is, they live* in Christian countries, and profess to believe

in the Christian religion. One half of these, at least, are destitute of what men call a saving faith. They belong to the class called "world's people." Now, adopting the popular doctrine, that without faith and repentance no man can be saved, it will follow, that there are only about one hundred millions of the present generation to be saved, while at least seven hundred millions must sink in an endless hell! Now, you come to me and ask me what I think God intends to do with the present generation of the world, consisting, as it does, of about eight hundred millions of human beings? I answer, I believe he intends to raise them all up from the dead. So you also believe. But you ask again, what do you think he intends to raise them up from the dead for? What will he do with them after the resurrection? I answer, I suppose he intends to give them all over to the devil, and let him torment them in fire and brimstone, through eternity. Oh! you say, that cannot be so. But why can it not be so? Because God is good, and he would rather let them all sleep for ever in the grave, than raise them up for such a purpose. It makes God the most cruel of all beings, and it cannot be true. Well, I reply, I am not sure that he intends to torment them *all*. I suppose he will make a part happy, and torment the remainder. With this you are satisfied, and can see no impeachment of the divine goodness in such a sentiment. But how so? Why, just because you have found out, that instead of tormenting eight hundred million souls, he only intends to burn seven hundred millions; the former would be very cruel, but the latter is a very small affair, of no consequence one way or the other. God may be very good for all that. Why, my dear sir, what is the difference whether there are seven or eight hundred millions to be tormented? It

is the *principle* of the thing, that I am talking about, and it was this that you contended for but a moment since; and how is it that you have made the wonderful discovery, that a course of action you yourself condemn as cruel, when applied to all, is merciful when applied to a part. I call on you to look at the myriads who you believe are to be damned, and tell me, if you are able, what good object there could be in raising them from the dead? I ask you to go down by the gulf of endless ruin in which you believe, and as you gaze upon the writhings and contortions of the countless millions whose fate is there fixed for eternity, tell me if it would not have been better to let them sleep in the grave, than to raise them up for such a purpose? This striving to evade the difficulty, by reducing the number of the sufferers, is of no avail. If it is cruel to raise one thousand souls up for the purpose of tormenting them, every principle of reason declares, that it is equally cruel to do the same to a single individual. I tell you, what you already know, that if a good being can do a man no good, he will at least do him no harm; and when God sees a world sleeping quietly in the arms of death, if a resurrection can do them no good, he would let them sleep on, in preference to raising them up for ceaseless wo. To raise man from the dead, for no other purpose but to torment him, would be an act of wanton cruelty; and whether the whole world or a part are to be thus raised, is of no consequence; for in either case, it is an act of unpitying malice, worthy only of a fiend of darkness, and as such, you may for ever rest assured that it cannot be done by a God of infinite goodness.

But let me ask, what is there in all the works of creation, or the providence of God, which could lead us to suppose that he intends to raise some men up for end-

less bliss, and others for immortal pain? If I should see the sun shining upon some men, and refusing his rays to others; or the showers of rain coming down upon some and passing by others; or if I should find the earth yielding the fruits and flowers to some and refusing her increase to others; why, then I might conclude that God had some favourites to bless, and that being partial in this world, he might be so in the next. But so long as I can look out upon the works of God, where his footsteps are clearly impressed, and see the sun rising upon the evil and the good, and the rain falling upon the just and the unjust, and the earth yielding her fruits with unsparing impartiality, to reward the labours of all, I must remain of my present opinion, that God is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, and that being impartial here, he will be equally so in another world.

But we may go even further than this. It is a fact, which can neither be disguised nor disputed, that the circumstances which surround man in the present existence, are such that the amount of happiness he enjoys is far greater than the misery he suffers. I know that much complaint is made of the miseries of the world, and we hear much of the sufferings of man. But I am satisfied that our joys are underrated in the estimate of those who complain, and the evils of life magnified far beyond what they are in reality. Unnumbered sources of enjoyment are opened, and innumerable mercies throng around us, in every avenue of life. The causes that conspire to make us happy, are more numerous than the hairs of our heads, and rivers of pleasure flow down the earth, while our miseries are "few and far between." In all the diversified forms of human life, the great Creator has so ordered, that the joy shall

triumph over the pain. You may go the wide earth over, and you will find happiness in every nation, tribe, tongue, grade and condition of humanity. You may walk the streets of the thronged city, where man dwells in the blessedness of civilization; or you may roam the desolate wilds of the wilderness, where the swarthy savage seeks his food with his quiver and his bow; you may wander over the bleak mountains of Lapland, whose pale children shiver in the midst of storms, and frosts, and snows, or traverse the sands of Ethiopia, where the sable African melts beneath the rays of a vertical sun, and you will find happiness among them all. I pledge you my truth, that for every tear of anguish that meets your eye, you shall see a thousand smiles of joy, and for every sigh of sorrow that greets your ear, you shall hear ten thousand joyous notes of happiness.

Talk as you will of the sorrows of this miserable world; sorrows there may be, but it is a good world and a happy one after all, and all our observation and experience bears testimony, that though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning. Now, I ask, what meaneth this? What meaneth this rolling river of peace, which pours its wondrous flood over all that live, and move, and breathe the vital air? What mean these untold and unsearchable treasures of love and mercy? I answer. They mean that God is good, and declare in a voice that cannot be misunderstood, that when God calls beings into existence, it is that he may bless them and make them happy. They lay open a rule of the divine government, as immutable as God himself, by which he has hitherto walked with undeviating steps in all time that has past. The rule is, that whenever God puts forth the energies of his

power, and gives life to any being, he confers a blessing and not a curse.

Six thousand years has the earth rolled upon its axis, and generation has trod close upon the heel of generation, and more beings have been brought into existence, than there are stars in the firmament or sands upon the shore of the sea. Go, doubting mortal, and bring them all up before you; assemble in one vast congregation, the myriads of those that have lived; and I challenge you to show me one to whom life has not, on the whole, been a blessing. God has been good to them all, and of every one, it may be said, when his head was laid in the grave, greater was the amount of his enjoyments than his sufferings. By what rule, then, I demand, do you arrive at the conclusion, that the same God, who has never yet called a being into existence, but to bless him, will, in the future, bestow another existence upon millions, only that he may curse them? Where, in the history of six thousand years, do you find your precedent? Where the fact that will warrant such a conclusion?

You may search the record of ages, and it is dumb; you may call upon the dead, and if they could answer, there would come up a voice from the sepulchres of the past, saying, that their tenants had all been blessed of God, and warning you against that black ingratitude, and high absurdity, which would subvert the principles which have marked the government of God, from creation's morning, and make him do that, which he has never done, and which he never can do, without belieing himself.

You may call upon the living, and they will rise up against you, and tell you, that God has blessed them; and their very love of life will tell you, that they deem

it a blessing, and reproach you with hard and ungracious views of God, when you believe that he is but fattening them as beasts for the slaughter, and intends to give you another life that shall prove an endless, bitter curse. Thus reason teaches upon the point in hand, and her voice is echoed by the scriptures of divine truth.

It is a remarkable fact, that whenever any of the divine writers speak of the resurrection from the dead, they mention it as a matter of most lively joy to all; nor do any of them intimate, that in the resurrection men are to be divided, and some raised up for one purpose, and some for another. Paul says: "I have hope toward God which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust." Now please to observe, that the resurrection even of the unjust, was, with the apostle, an object of hope. If he had believed that the unjust were to be raised up to be tormented, he would not have said that he hoped for it. He might indeed have said, as men now often say, he was *afraid* that it would be so; but, as a *feeling* man, he could not have *hoped* for it. So with all the divine writers; they set forth the resurrection as a matter of lively hope, and whenever they mention it they break out in expressions of extatic joy. This single circumstance is sufficient of itself to prove that they regarded the resurrection state as a blessing; for had they looked upon it as the means of introducing a greater part of the human family into a life, worse by far than non-existence, they would have mourned over it, as a calamity, rather than rejoiced at it as the richest and most valuable of blessings. But I have not time to dwell longer on this point.

*III.* Our third proposition is, that God intends to raise

all men up from the dead for the purpose of making them holy and happy.

If I have shown that the other propositions are untrue, then it follows that this, the only one that remains, must be true. That it harmonizes with the voice of nature, the character of God, and the experience of a world, no man can doubt after a moment's reflection upon the subject. Nature teaches the impartial goodness of God, reason ascribes to him every possibly great and glorious attribute and perfection, that can command our love or invite our praise, and there is no man living who has not experienced enough to satisfy a reasonable being that God is his friend; and from all these sources the presumption, *a priori*, is strong, yea, incontestible, that if God raises all men from the dead at all, it will be for the purpose of doing them good—not evil.

But the scriptures are most clear and explicit upon this point. It is true, that there is *not much* said in the Bible about the precise state or condition of man, in the resurrection, for the controversy between Christians and their opposers, in those days, was rather upon the truth or falsity of the resurrection itself, than upon any circumstances that might attend it. With them, death was the last enemy, and if they proved that God would destroy death, it does not seem to have entered their minds that they would also be required to prove that there would not remain other and far more dreadful enemies. Hence they argued that man should rise from the dead, and preached Jesus and the resurrection, and having established that truth, they seem to have taken it for granted that the future life, conferred as it was by a merciful God, would be one of blessedness and joy. Nor does it seem that they thought it necessary to go into an argument to prove that God intended the future

state as a most valuable blessing to those who should receive it.

Take an illustration. In the 15th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle gives a more particular account of the state of man in the resurrection, than can be found in any other part of the Bible; and yet this is introduced as an incidental circumstance, rather than a legitimate part of his argument. He argues the doctrine of the resurrection with great power against those who denied it, and proves, from principles admitted by his opponents, the truth of the doctrine, which he sums up in the words of our text:—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." He continues by informing his hearers that Christ, having subdued all things unto himself, and destroyed death, the last enemy, should deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God should be "all in all." But he adds, some man will say, "How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come forth?" Mark his answer. "Thou fool." As much as to say, that every man ought to understand that matter, and none but an ignorant man would ask such a question. He goes on, however, to answer it. He says there are celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, natural bodies and spiritual bodies, differing in glory, and intimates that they ought to know that man, when raised from the dead, would be spiritual. "As is the earthy so are they that are earthy, and as is the heavenly so are they that are heavenly." And thus he concludes:—"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

*Similar* remarks will apply to the conversation of our

Saviour with the Sadducees. They had imagined a resurrection state altogether analogous to this world, and came to him with an objection founded upon the case of the woman who had seven husbands, desiring to know whose wife she should be of the seven in the resurrection. He at once charged them with ignorance in proposing such a question. "Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God which are in heaven."

Here I rest upon this point; if there is truth in the testimony of Paul, or in the words of the Saviour, then is it settled, that the state of man, in the resurrection, is one of immortality, incorruption, glory, and power, such as is enjoyed by the angels of God which are in heaven; nor is there the least possible authority for saying, that man shall be raised in two classes, one like the angels of God in heaven, and the other like the devils that are in hell!

## SERMON X.

### DESTRUCTION OF DEATH.

"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."
Revelation xxi. 4.

In my last lecture I spoke of the resurrection of the dead, as the crowning excellency of the Gospel. I attempted to show from reason, experience and all that we know of the character and government of God, that it was even more than probable, if he raised man from the dead at all, it would be for the benevolent purpose of making him holy and happy. I also showed you, very briefly, that the scriptures in this respect harmonize with reason and experience.

In the present discourse I intend to give you another view of the same subject, and I shall attempt to show you that the resurrection state, as presented in the Gospel, is one of immortal blessedness and felicity. In this world, pain, sickness, sorrow and death are ills necessarily incident to humanity; but in that better and happier land, these things shall be no more. Pain, sorrow and crying, and all that bears the name of death, shall be done away, and shall be found no more for ever. Such is the clear and explicit doctrine of my text, and it is difficult for me to conceive how ingenuity or sophistry can torture any thing else out of it. I will not therefore, consume time in discussing the question, whether *the text does* or does not teach that doctrine; for its

language is too plain and positive to admit of a doubt in the candid and honest mind, which is not warped by prejudice, or darkened by superstition.

I will rather give you some additional reasons for believing that a result so grand and glorious, is ordained in the firm counsels of God, and must certainly be realised.

I. The scriptures elsewhere affirm the same heart-cheering and soul-reviving sentiment.

For myself it would not require a miracle, nor the oft repeated testimony of the divine word, to produce in my mind the conviction, that a doctrine so perfectly consonant to all that I know of God is true. I see the evidences of divine love so legibly written out upon the face of nature and providence, and I have experienced so much of the goodness of God, that I am prepared to believe any thing good of him. The prophet asks, "Is any thing too hard for the Almighty?" The answer is, no. I ask, is any thing *too good* for God to do? And my joyful spirit answers, nay. There is no good, however great, no blessing, however valuable, that we may not anticipate from his hand.

If therefore, the final and immortal blessedness of the world were only whispered from on high, in a solitary instance, I would seize upon that whisper and hold it as a precious and sure foundation of hope. But it unfortunately happens, that an ungrateful world of mortals are far more ready to believe evil than good of God. You may depict before them a burning hell, filled with the great multitude of the human race, writhing in the flames of everlasting torments, and God sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, mocking their dismal groans, and laughing at the contortions of deathless pain. All *this you may* say of your Father, and the public ear will

be open to receive the perjured lie, and the hearts of people will willingly believe even this blackest, fou slander of heaven's gracious Lord and King!

From Adam to the present day, men have shown their conduct and their faith, that they are far n ready to believe evil than good of God. They sooner believe that God will do them harm than h them. For this cause, it is that the Bible abou in "exceedingly great and precious promises," and g "line upon line and precept upon precept," for it kn eth that men are slow of heart to believe, and pron stagger at the promises of God through unbelief.

Could I call back from the abodes of the blessed high the great Apostle of the Gentiles, the master-s of that band of worthies who took their lives in t hands, and went forth to proclaim the great salvat he would point to Jesus, and say, as he said in the d of his flesh, "he must reign." Aye, "he *must r* until he hath put all enemies under his feet, and the enemy death shall be destroyed." He would tell that "for this purpose the Son of God was manifes that he might destroy death, and him that had the po of death, and deliver those who through fear of de were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" that " mortal shall put on immortality, and this corrupt shall put on incorruption, and then shall be brough pass the saying, that is written, "death is swallowed in victory;" and he would close with the triumph doxology, "Oh grave where is thy victory! oh de where is thy sting?" "Thirty long years did I pre this doctrine, and labor and toil and suffer in its defe For it I was persecuted; I breathed the noisome va *of the dungeon*; I bore upon my limbs the galling chai *I submitted* my back to the scourge till it ran d

with gore; I bore the bruises of stones that were hurled by my enemies; and *all* that I might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Therefore did I both labour and suffer reproach, because I trusted in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.

Could I call upon the spirit that touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with a coal from the altar of truth in heaven, I should hear repeated again, what is already written for your instruction, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall find joy and gladness, and sighing and sorrowing shall flee away." Indeed all the prophets have spoken of these things, for an Apostle says, "God has spoken of the times of the restitution of all things by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." Not one of them has failed, but they have all spoke of these times, and borne their testimony that there shall come a time when sin and sorrow, pain, crying and death, shall be known no more.

I may as well pause here as any where, for there is no end to testimony of this kind, and if the clear and explicit word already quoted does not produce conviction, no amount of evidence would be sufficient; for if men will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead. I lay it down therefore, as a doctrine established by the *concurrent testimony* of all God's holy prophets since

the world began, that all sorrow and crying shall cease, and pain and death shall be no more.

I know the objection that will rise in the minds of my hearers here. I shall be told that I quote only the promises of the Gospel, but I pass by the threatenings of the law. Though there are many great and precious promises, there are also severe threatenings. But what then? Is the law against the promises? I answer, as the Apostle answered, "By no means," and I say as he said, "The covenant which was before confirmed of God in Christ, the law which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, cannot disannul, that it should make the promises of God of none effect." I know, as well as you can know, that there are many threatenings in the law, but I tell you that these are not against the promises, and when you explain them in such a manner as to make them conflict with the promises, you pervert them. I care not how ingenious your reasoning, or how plausible your conclusion, here is the rule laid down by the Apostle, "The law is not against the promises," and if you make it so by your explanation, your explanation is wrong. This is a rule that you are bound to follow; for I maintain you have no right to give such interpretations of the law as will set it against the promises.

We are frequently accused of explaining away and perverting the threatenings, and I must illustrate this matter, for by it we are frequently thrown into a false position. Here is the covenant, it promises with the most solemn certainty, that there shall come a time when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. The objector brings up one of the threatenings, as for instance, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" *and he* asks me, how I will explain it consistently with

my views? Now suppose I could not do so, and suppose also, there were a hundred other passages of the same kind, which I could not explain in accordance with my text; why, the mass of community would cry out, that the Universalist was confounded, and his doctrine false. But stop a moment. This should be my answer:—I tell you sir, frankly, that I do not know what that passage or these passages mean. They are to me dark. But I can tell you what they do not mean. They do not mean any thing contrary to the covenant of eternal mercy and truth; for the law is not against the Gospel; and I think it more likely that you, sir, are mistaken than that God should contradict, in one part of his word, what he has said in another. God has said there shall be no more pain, sorrow, nor crying, and though I know not the meaning of that passage, I do know that he does not there contradict himself, and teach endless pain and sorrow.

Do you tell me that such is the obvious import of the passage? My answer is, then the two passages contradict themselves, and it is not *my* business, but *yours*, to explain the matter. I am not willing to undertake, gratuitously, the labour of extricating you from your own contradictions; and if I do so, I protest most seriously that you shall not stand by and tauntingly accuse me of explaining away the meaning of the Scriptures. I tell you, yet once more, that the law is not against the promises, and if you, by your explanations, set them at variance, it is your business to get out of the difficulty; and if you will not allow me so to explain the law that it shall agree with the promises, I shall turn you over to the infidel, whose mouth you fill with arguments, saying, your Bible is a bundle of contradictions, promising *in one place what it* denies in another.

I have made these remarks upon the supposition that no man can so explain the threatenings, that they shall clearly be seen to harmonize with the promises. But this I am not willing to grant for truth. I will not say what I can do, but I do say, that there is no threatening of the law which is not susceptible of a reasonable and consistent explanation, in perfect accordance with the spirit of the promises.

It surely cannot be expected of me, that I shall take up all the threatenings of the law, and explain them in this discourse. I will take a single one, and that shall be the one already quoted, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." If by the word everlasting, here, you understand a strictly endless duration, it will at once be seen that the passage contradicts that sacred promise of the Gospel, which guarantees that the time shall come when tears shall be wiped from all faces, and there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying. But is the law against the promises? The Apostle says, No. Well, then, your exposition of the text is wrong. What shall be done? Why, just turn to the Old Testament, and see how the writers used the word everlasting. There you read of an "everlasting priesthood," of an "everlasting possession" of the land of Canaan by the children of Israel; and many other things are called everlasting, which we know either have or must come to an end. Why, then, may we not suppose that Jesus used the word in the same sense that it was used in the Old Testament, and thus avoid the absurdity of making the Scriptures contradict themselves? In this sense of the word, there is perfect harmony between the threatenings and the promises; and though the penalty of the law is executed, it will not prevent the fulfilment of the promises.

But I observe again, The very fact that God threatens in the Bible to punish sin, is a proof that such a time as is named in my text will come. Suppose, for instance, our rulers should make laws, and annex to them no penalties, and that the executors of the laws should take no notice of transgression. Would not the inference be unavoidable, that our legislators cared not for obedience to the laws? But let them make laws, and guard them by proper penalties, and then let us see the officers of justice vigilant in seeking out and visiting the penalty of the laws upon the guilty. Then may we conclude that our rulers are opposed to crime, and determined to suppress it. So in this case, if God did not threaten to punish sin, we might conclude that obedience and disobedience were alike to him. But when we see his law guarded by a penalty, and read that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness," we hail it as a proof that God is the friend of virtue, which is peace, and that he is opposed to all sin, and determined to suppress it; aye, to uproot it from the universe.

Bring out, now, your threatenings of the law; array them all before me, and shout in anticipation of victory. Your triumph is short. You are proving the very thing you would disprove. I allow there are many threatenings in the Bible. But what then? Are these threatenings against the promises? Once more, I tell you nay. They are the proof that God is the friend of order, law, virtue, and happiness; that he is the enemy of sin and misery, and that he will destroy them for ever, and fulfil his gracious promises in the establishment of universal holiness and felicity.

Thus much I have felt myself in duty bound to say, of the threatenings of the law, and I have done so, because

it was impossible for me to take up, one by one, these threatenings, and explain them; and because these principles of interpretation will put it in your power to explain them for yourselves, so far as their bearing upon the question before us is concerned. Take this rule along with you, and you need not err. "The law is not against the promises," and when you find any explanation of a threatening of the law, which makes it contradict the promises of God, be assured that explanation is wrong. But I pass on and remark,

II. The very constitution of man is proof of the truth of our main position.

In all the ever-varied and changing circumstances of human life, there may be found in man a firmly-seated principle, which leads him onward, and bears him upward, to immortality; a principle that yearns for future life, and pants for deliverance from the grave. Now, there is no other way in which I can account for this fact, but upon the supposition that the same God who has planted this seed in an earthly soil, has determined that it shall spring up, and grow, and ripen, in a better world. Otherwise, man would have been made like the beasts, with no hope or wish extending into the future.

But there is another view to be taken of this matter. The text points not only to the triumph over death, but to the end of pain, sorrow, and crying. It is worthy of some consideration, that none of these are elements of the mind. We shrink from pain with instinctive dread, and we would avoid all sorrow. Had it been the intention of the wise Creator that man should be eternally the subject of pain and sorrow, he would have so made him, that these should have been the elements of the *mind, and* necessary to his comfortable existence. This *he has not* done, and hence we infer, that they are not

ends in the divine government, but simply the means employed to promote other ends. In this imperfect state, they may be necessary as a medicine, but they are not food; and in that blessed land whose inhabitants shall never say "I am sick," they will not be needful.

I might push the argument further, and show you, from the very first principles of philosophy, that the endless continuance of pain and sorrow is impossible. The tendency of all pain is to corrode and destroy, and if it preys continually upon the mind or body, it will destroy it. If, therefore, man, in the other world, shall be the subject of perpetual pain, he must also be the subject of death; and even then it could not be of endless duration; because it would cease, for the same reason that fire will go out when it has consumed the fuel upon which it feeds. These are mere hints, thrown out with a hope that my hearers will reflect upon them at their leisure.

III. The character of God affords strong ground for hope that this text will be fulfilled.

That God is possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, no man who believes the Bible can question. Now, it will not be disputed, that a God of infinite wisdom could, if he were so disposed, devise a plan, which if carried into effect, would result in the final and complete happiness of all the creatures of his creation. There is just as little doubt that infinite goodness would seek this, the best of all possible objects. Neither can it be doubted that almighty power could execute the plan suggested by goodness and contrived by wisdom. It is therefore evident, that the result of the combined action of these admitted attributes of the Deity, is the very thing for which we are contending, and this conclusion cannot be avoided without denying the perfection of one,

or all these attributes of God. If we say he could not do it, we limit his wisdom or power, and if we say he would not, we deny his goodness; and in either case we deny that God which the Bible sets forth, and all nature teaches us to adore.

Still again, there is no conceivable good that could result from the endless continuance of death, pain, and sorrow. Though we shudder at the thought of death, yet sober reason will tell us, that in this world it is needful that we should die. Viewed in the light of the blessed Gospel, death is

> "The door to everlasting bliss,"

and it comes to man as a friend, and is

> "But the voice that Jesus sends,
> To call us to his arms."

In this light we can see how a wise and kind Father could introduce death into the world. The mind thus enlightened can sentimentally adopt the language of the poet, and say,

> "I would not live alway away from my God,
> Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
> Where the rivers of pleasure roll o'er the bright plains,
> And the noontide of glory eternally reigns."

The same is true of all the pains, sorrows, and afflictions of this life. Viewing them as means, and not ends, of the divine government, we can say that they are the well-intended chastisements of a faithful friend, designed to train us for the skies, and wean our affections from that world which we must shortly leave. In this view, we can see the goodness of God shining *out from* the darkness of the grave, and from every cloud

of sorrow, like a beautiful bow of promise, from the lowering storm, which God has made the token of his steadfast covenant.

But once admit that death, and pain, and sorrow, are to remain for ever, and the aspect of things is fearfully changed. In vain may you then ask for any good result from these existences, for neither God, nor man, nor angels, nor demons, could reap either pleasure, ease, profit, or advantage, from them. On the contrary, the effect would be evil, and only evil, and that continually. Hence I say, that the character of God, as a good being, forbids their endless existence, and speaks eloquently in favor of the doctrine of my text.

IV. The fourth, and last reason I offer in support of the position assumed, is found in the text itself. "For the former things are passed away." I understand the revelator here to teach, that all the causes of death, pain, sorrow, and crying, shall pass away, and this is a good reason why the effect shall cease also. For if the fountain is dried up, the streams must of course cease to flow.

What is the cause of death? If you allude to natural death, it is the necessary effect of nature's laws operating on a mortal body; and if you allude to moral death, it is the effect of sin. But these pass away. The word of the testimony is, that "as we have borne the image of the earthly, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly, and as we were sown a mortal body, we shall be raised a spiritual body." Here, then, you may see that man shall leave mortality in the grave, and rise in the strength of a new and immortal constitution, and thus, the causes of death having passed away, "there shall be no more death."

Look at it in another light. The cause of moral death is sin. But the carnal mind must pass away, and with

it all those lusts and passions which lead men into sin. There, in that better world, man shall be spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible, and he shall sin no more for ever. All sorrow, crying, and pain, shall pass away, for the same reason—the causes that produce them shall be found no more to exist.

What are the causes of pain and sorrow? I answer, they are many. First upon the catalogue is sin, the "prolific mother of all our woes." But this shall pass away, for Jesus must reign until he hath subdued all things unto himself, and God shall be all in all. Then shall the deepest, darkest, bitterest fountain of human wo be dried up, and man shall no more feel the pangs of guilt, nor writhe under the scourgings of remorse and fear, for holiness, and peace, shall reign in all the souls that God has made.

But ignorance and error are causes of much sorrow and crying. Man is ignorant, and he knows not the God that made him, nor his own destiny. He pictures to himself a God of wrath and fury, and trembles like a slave before him. On the wings of imagination he goes forward to the future world, and superstition rears her fabled hell, and peoples it with thronging millions of the human race, and bids man behold there his possible, nay, even probable home. Fathers mourn for their sons, and mothers for their children; not as Rachael, because they are not; but because they fear that they are either suffering, or in danger of suffering the torments of the eternal pit. O! who can tell how deep the tide, and how awful the amount of sorrow that every day witnesses, as the effect of this God-dishonoring and joy-killing superstition of the world. But these shall pass away. The light of eternity shall unveil the king in *his beauty*, and pour a flood of glory upon the vision of a

risen, purified, and exalted world. Then shall the things which prophets and patriarchs saw, through a glass darkly, be seen face to face; and the fulfilment of all that has been spoken, shall reveal to man the fact, that God's grace has made him the heir of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Then truth shall be victorious, and all error be lost in eternal day, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Such is the final result of the divine government, and truly it is worthy of a God!

I look around me on earth, and I see death riding forth conquering and to conquer. He whets his glittering sword, and the young, and the strong, fall before him. He bends his bow, and the arrow speeds for the life of his fated victim. I look again, and my fellows are falling, as leaves before the chilling blast, into the grave. I look to the future, and I know that when a few more years, at most, are passed, our heads will be low, and the sad funeral knell shall be sounded over the last of all that now live and breathe the vital air. I see the tears falling fast and freely, from the eyes of the afflicted, and the cast down, and I hear the sigh of the widow, and the moan of the orphan, borne upon every passing gale that blows. But I remember that these things are but for a season. Soon, very soon, all the myriads of the human family shall be delivered, and shall feel sorrow and pain no more for ever.

But I cannot pause here. I look to the heavens, and they are garnished with stars, and I remember that these stars, though but specks to us, are worlds so large, that our earth is but an atom in the comparison. The *presumption is that* God has peopled their solitudes,

and caused them to swarm with life and intelligence. Whether the fair face of the moon, and the stars, is ever wet with the tears of anguish, or whether death there reigns, we have not been certified. But this one thing we may conclude. If sympathizing natures now weep in other worlds, or death now sways his sceptre over other intelligences, or sin has reared his head in the distant stars, it shall not be so always, for these things shall pass away, and in all the universe of God, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. While far, far beyond this earthly sphere, system rolls on system, and world on world, and distant planets wheel their endless circles round their centres, and these again round one common centre, God—so shall it be in the moral universe. Discord and strife shall cease. God's hand shall move on his own undisturbed affairs in perfect harmony and peace. The last tear shall fall from the eye of sorrow, and the last sigh of anguish shall be hushed in the silence of perpetual joy, nor shall weeping be heard again while God's throne shall stand.

> "No sigh, no murmur, the wide world shall hear,
> From every face, he wipes off every tear,
> In adamantine chains shall death be bound,
> And hell's grim tyrant feel the eternal wound."

Such is the plan of God, and such the grand consummation to which the text points the eye of faith!

Praise the Lord! all the ends of the earth!

Praise him! sun, moon, and stars!

Praise him! ye heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens!

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!

Oh! speak good of his name, for he is good, and his *mercy* endureth for ever.

# SERMON XI.

## NATURE OF SALVATION.

"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially those that believe."
1 Tim. iv. 10.

It is a lamentable truth, that in all ages and countries, those who have embraced opinions differing from the popular doctrines of the day, have suffered reproach in consequence of their faith. Man has forgotten the great truth that his fellow-man has the same right to think as himself, and that every one is accountable for himself, and to God alone. For this reason he has persecuted his fellow for his opinions' sake, and pointed to the man whose faith did not exactly square with the popular standard, as a proper object of reproach, and a mark at which bigotry might hurl her arrows of wrath with impunity.

Look for a moment at the life and ministry of Christ, for an illustration of this remark. *He* taught a system of faith and practice somewhat different from the prevailing notions of the day. For this reason he suffered reproach from the people to whom he came with his message of grace and truth. They even followed him with the bloody sword of the persecutor, and paused not until they heard his dying groan from an ignominious cross.

So it was with his disciples. They had learned their

doctrines from Christ, and were preachers of that Gospel, which carried the joys of salvation, not merely to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. The consequence was, that the wrath of the people waxed exceedingly hot against them, and the storm which had gathered around their Master, broke with violence upon their heads. Hence their lives were made, from the beginning to the end, one continued scene of reproach and suffering.

The text informs us, in a very explicit manner, what was the obnoxious feature in their faith, which caused all their sufferings. What think you, my hearers, it was that excited the opposition and persecution of the world? Was it their faith in an angry and cruel God, a merciless devil, or an endless hell? Did they curse the people with endless wo, and while they saved a few damn the great mass of community? Nay, nothing like it. But they "trusted in the living God who was the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believed," and for this cause they were met with all the powers of reproach and persecution. To the narrow minds, and selfish feelings of the people of that age, no sentiment was more obnoxious than this.

The Jews, as a people, had long considered themselves as the peculiar people of God, and the only objects of heaven's favorable regard. They were the children of Abraham, and Abraham was the father of the faithful, and they expected, in consequence of that relationship, to be the favorites of heaven; nor did they imagine that the Gentiles could at all be included in the covenant of eternal mercy. So thought the *most liberal* among them; but the greater part of them could not extend the mercies of God so far as to reach the case of *all the Jews*. The Pharisee and the Sadducee, could

each claim for himself and his sect, a monopoly of the divine mercy, and deny it to the other.

With such views and feelings, it is no matter of surprise, that they should rise up in opposition to a system which laid the axe at the root of all their selfish hopes, and taught them to trust in God alone, whose goodness was as rich and free for the Gentile as the Jew, and to whom the distinctions of nations, tribes, and sects, were all alike. It was not to be expected that those who had considered themselves better than others, and who had trusted themselves that they were righteous, should come down upon a level with others, and willingly trust in a God who would save their enemies as well as themselves.

If Paul and his coadjutors had flattered the vanity of the Jews, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and told them that they should all be saved, and all the rest of the world should be damned, they would have been well pleased with such a sentiment, and we should never have heard of the labors and sufferings of the apostles in the promulgation of such a faith. But when they told the people that God was the Father of all, and informed the proud and self-righteous Pharisees, that so far from their being favorites of God, and exclusive heirs of the kingdom, "even publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of heaven before them," then it was that their pride was hurt, and they rose up to reproach and condemn.

I cannot omit the remark here, that the same spirit which reproached the apostles, still lives, and lifts the few above the many, and hurls the thunders of deepest damnation at those who venture to extend salvation beyond the landmark set up by the popular faith of the *day. The great* mass of professors of Christianity,

however, have avoided the reproach of trusting in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, by ceasing to trust in such a God. Where, among all the numerous sects of Christians, will you find the one that trusts in God, who is the Saviour of all men? Is it the Calvinist? Who ever heard of a man being reproached for believing in the salvation of all, who adhered to the creed which saith: "God out of his own mere good pleasure, elected some to be redeemed and everlastingly saved, and the remainder he was pleased to pass by, and ordain to dishonor and wrath, to the praise of his vindictive justice?" Does the Methodist labor and suffer reproach for this cause? I have indeed heard the enemies of that sect, charge them with holding to sentiments which would lead to the salvation of all; but I have just as often heard the charge repelled as a gross slander, accompanied with a prompt denial that they believe any such thing. Again then, I ask, who are they who now both labor and suffer reproach, because they trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men? I leave you to answer the question, and I know that you can, if you will, answer it correctly.

I may remark, in passing, that God is the Saviour of no more than he saves or will save. If ten men are in danger of upsetting in a boat, and I go out to save them, you could not call me the saviour of ten, unless I saved them. If you saw me launch out for their relief, and knew perfectly well that I would save them, you could with propriety call me the saviour of the ten, even before the work was actually done; but if it should turn out, in the end, that I should save but five, then it would prove, that you was mistaken in saying that I was the *saviour of* the ten. So here, God is not the Saviour of a *soul more* than he actually saves. True, that work is

not yet accomplished. But the apostle knew that he had engaged in the work, and that he could not fail of success, and therefore he called him the Saviour of all men. But should it turn out, in the end, that God should save but a part, then would it be proved that the apostle was wrong, when he called him the "Saviour of all men."

I know it is said, that God *offers* salvation to all; but it should be remembered that an *offer* of salvation is one thing, and *salvation itself* is another. If I *offer* to save a man who is drowning, *that* does not save him, neither does it make me his saviour from death. God may offer salvation to man, but that does not save him, neither does it make God his Saviour. He is the Saviour only of as many as he saves. Should any man dispute this, I ask him to go forward to the future world, and as he looks down into that dismal hell, in which he believes, and beholds the multitude of its hopeless inhabitants, let him tell me, if he will, in what sense God is their Saviour? It matters not what may have been *offered* them, what have they *received?* is the question on which your answer must depend. I care not what *means* may have been put in operation for their salvation. If these means were not *effectual*, and they are not saved, then God is not their *Saviour*, and the apostle labored and suffered reproach for a trust, that was vain and futile in the extreme.

It is not my purpose, however, in this discourse, to argue at great length the question of the extent of salvation, but rather I propose to explain its *nature*.

The term salvation is used generally in a very vague and indefinite sense, and much of the controversy about the extent and conditions of salvation, arises from a *want of precision* in the idea attached to this word. The

scriptures use it in various senses, according to the circumstances and situation of the person, or persons, who are said to be saved. When Peter, sinking in the deep, cried, "*Lord save me*," we understand that he wished to be saved from drowning. When Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be *saved*," we suppose he alluded to their salvation from death, which then stared them in the face. Many other instances might be noted of a similar character, but these are sufficient to show, that there is need of much caution in regard to the use of this word, and that we shall greatly err if we apply this word always to a future and eternal salvation.

There has been a great question in the world, whether gospel salvation is conditional or unconditional, limited or universal; and it will appear in the course of this discussion, that all this controversy originates in a want of attention to the meaning of this word, and that, in a *sense*, *both* parties have been right, and *both* wrong. There are *two* kinds of salvation mentioned in the text, and it will appear on examination, that one is limited and conditional, and the other universal and unconditional. So that what may be affirmed of the one, cannot be affirmed of the other. To illustrate these two kinds of salvation is the work now before us. I notice

I. The *special salvation* of the believer. God is the Saviour of all men, *especially* of those that believe.

It is often remarked by those who oppose the doctrine of universal salvation, that if God is the Saviour of all men, then there is no difference between the saint and the sinner, the believer and unbeliever. Those who make this remark, seem to forget, that while God is declared to be the Saviour of all men, he is also said to be *especially* the Saviour of the believer. Though it is

true, that God is the Saviour of all, yet a little more attention would teach you, that all along, in Scripture, there is a salvation held forth as the *special property* of the believer, in which the unbeliever can have no part or lot; and though all shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, yet the believer *alone* can enjoy this special salvation.

1. The believer is saved from sin, "the direst foe of man."

The prophet spoke truly when he said, "Know therefore and understand that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God." No man is more to be pitied than the bold transgressor of the laws of God. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The path in which he walks is beset with ills on every side, and if perchance he finds a flowery spot, it is but the green sod beneath which slumbers the earthquake and the storm; and if there are roses around him, he may pluck them, indeed, but his limbs will be torn and bleeding, with the thorns that hedge them round. Such is sin, and to be saved from its power, is a boon more desirable than all the riches of earth, or the honors of a fading world. This salvation is wrought upon the believer by faith. His name was "called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins." The doctrines taught, and the examples presented in the gospel, are such, that faith works by love, and purifies the heart, and makes man holy as God is holy. "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," is the constant teaching of the doctrine, the precept, and the example of Christ. Hence it is evident, that the man who receives into his heart this *faith, copies the* examples, practices the precepts, and

cherishes the spirit of Jesus, is saved from sin and all its woes. This is the *special salvation* of the believer. And to this salvation, all that numerous class of passages refer, which speak of being washed and purified by the faith of Christ. By this salvation, Christ came "to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Salvation from sin, is the first item in the special salvation of the believer, and this is a *conditional* salvation, depending upon the condition of faith and repentance; and so far as *this world* is concerned, it is *not* universal, but limited in extent.

2. The believer is saved from ignorance of God and his character.

Men by nature know not God, and though to the mind that has been enlightened with the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," yet it was never in the power of the *unaided* wisdom of this world, to obtain that true knowledge of God which is life eternal. Man, without a revelation, could see in the works of nature around him evidences of a power more energetic than the arm of mortals; but whether that power existed in the person of a faithful friend, or an implacable enemy, was a question that he could not solve. True, the sun shone, as now, upon the evil and the good, and the rain descended upon the just and the unjust, as evidence of the divine benignity; and when man looked at these tokens of goodness, he hoped that God was good. But when the thunder uttered its voice in the mountains, or the earthquake rocked the plains, and the tempest howled in fury around, and seemed ready to mingle, "heaven, earth, and sea," *then* fear took the place of *hope*, and dread forebodings came over the soul, and

destroyed its peace. Then it was, that "fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods," and the elements became invested with all the terrors that imagination could invent. *Then*, false gods were created in every grove, and mountain; and altars were reared in every hill and dale, and beside every stream that flowed. Then, the fires of Tophet were kindled, and the altars of Baal ran down with the gore of babes and sucklings, which were slain to placate the wrath, or secure the favor of some idol divinity, whose supposed existence was a bitter curse, diffusing misery, deep and dreadful misery through all the life of the worshipper.

Such was, and such *is* the effect of ignorance of God, and from all this the believer in Christ is saved. It was Jesus of Nazareth, who tore away the veil which had so long obscured the face of the "excellent glory," and revealed the "king in his beauty," as the kind friend, and the everlasting Father of the human race. By faith, the believer looks upward to God as the holiest and best of all; and though storms and tempests may be around about him, he knoweth that there is one, that rideth upon the storm, and orders all things well. In him, he sees his Father, and he believes that he will never leave nor forsake him; but that his strong arm, which is never shortened that it cannot save, will be made bare in his defence, to deliver, to bless, and to save. Believing thus, the soul enters into rest, and the mind is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is that *special salvation*, in another of its items, which it is the privilege of the believer in Christ alone to enjoy.

3. The believer is saved from the bondage of the fear of death.

Without the gospel man knows nothing of the future. *Before the advent* of Christ, darkness shrouded in im-

penetrable gloom all beyond the grave. Death was abroad in the earth, in "gorgon terrors clad," and before him all that was fair, and beautiful, and strong, in humanity, withered and died as the flower that is cut down and fadeth before the heat of the sun, and *behind* him were the bones of nations that had died, and "behold the sinews were wasted, and the bones were exceedingly dry." "If a man die shall he live again?" was a question which no man could answer. Or if it was answered at all by man, the *very answer* became a more fruitful source of misery, than even the doubt and uncertainty of the question itself. Some of the heathen philosophers invented and endeavored to support the doctrine of the soul's immortality, but they soon coupled it with doctrines of future wo, which made it worse by far than the gloom of annihilation. They indeed taught an immortal existence, but to the greater part of the human family it was an existence of torment unutterable, to be dreaded as a curse, rather than sought as a rich and valuable blessing.

Christ came to open up a pathway through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and to point the eye of faith to that better and happier land, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." He brought life and immortality to light, and demonstrated by his own resurrection from the dead, that *man* shall rise triumphant from the spoiler's power, and bloom with unfading youth in the paradise of his God.

Here the poor Pagan learns to cast his idols and his temples to the moles and the bats, and to rejoice in that truth which giveth life to the world. By faith in this, the poor mortal that trembles in view of the dark gulf, *where the* ashes of a universe are scattered by the winds *of time*, and who weeps over the valley of dry bones,

is saved from all his fears, for he sees the spirit of the Lord moving upon the valley, and believes that even the dry bones shall live. By faith in this, the trembling mortal who faintly hopes for a heaven of joy, but more dreadfully fears a burning hell of endless wo, for himself or his children, is saved from his doubts and fears, and taught to look forward to the time when death and hell shall be destroyed, and all created humanity shall be redeemed from sorrow, and ransomed from the grave, and shall dwell in the fulness of eternal and unsullied joy. This is the special salvation of the believer in another of its items.

And here I leave this part of my subject, with the simple remark, that the salvation of which I have been speaking, is spoken of in the scripture all along as conditional. This is the salvation which is spoken of as dependent upon faith and repentance. This is the salvation which man is exhorted to "work out," with which he that believeth shall be saved, and which he that believeth not cannot enjoy. It is confined alone to the believer, and is set forth as a thing for which man should labour perseveringly, as for a treasure more valuable than aught that the world can afford. The great cause of error in the world is, that professors of christianity do not bear in mind this special salvation; but they apply the term salvation almost exclusively to a future world, and therefore contend that that is conditional which depends alone upon the will, purpose and power of God. Whereas the *only salvation* that depends at all upon human agency, is, that *special salvation* which is wrought in the believer here on earth.

II. I come to speak of that salvation which is for all men.

*And here I beg to* remind you, that it is no more cer-

tain that God is especially the Saviour of the believer, than that he is positively the Saviour of all men. Paul trusted in the living God, who was the Saviour of all men, and the fact that he is especially the Saviour of the believer, does not abate *one fraction* from the truth, that he is the Saviour of all. I notice this particularly because the enemies of Universalism are frequently heard insisting upon the last clause of the text, as if it had some magic power to limit or contradict the first clause. When we say that God is the Saviour of all men, the reply almost uniformly is, yes, but you should remember that the text says, that he is especially the Saviour of those that believe. Very well, and what then? Because the last part of the text says, he is especially the Saviour of the believer, are we to conclude that the *first part* is false, and that he is *not* the Saviour of all men, but only of believers? This word *especially* is so much pressed into the service of a partial faith, that I must give it a passing notice, and if I borrow an illustration it will not be the less useful. The idea is, that this word limits the salvation of God to believers alone. Now Paul wrote to Timothy saying, "The cloak that I left with thee at Troas, bring with thee when thou comest, and the books, but *especially* the parchment." There is precisely as much reason in saying, that Paul did not want the cloak and the books, because he said, "*especially* the parchment," as there is in saying, that God is not the Saviour of any but believers, because the text says especially of them that believe; and if I tell you, that Paul wanted both the cloak and the books, you ought to object at once, and remind me that he said he *especially* wanted the parchment. I *know* he said so, but what then? Does that prove that *he* wanted nothing else? By no means. So in the text.

The fact that God is said to be the Saviour, "especially of those that believe," has no effect at all upon the previous and positive assertion that he is the Saviour of all men.

But the question comes up, in what sense is God the Saviour of all men? Or what are the evils from which he saves them? I answer, from the power of death and the darkness of the grave, through the resurrection from the dead. This salvation is for *all*, the saint and the sinner, the believer and the unbeliever. So the Saviour said, "Of all the Father hath given me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up again at the last day." So also the Apostle said, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

This salvation is unconditional, and is uniformly so represented in the scriptures. Human agency cannot effect it, nor does it, or *can* it depend upon any thing that man can do, or believe, or upon the strength of man in any sense of the word. Go to the tombs, and ask the sleeping dead if they can raise themselves from their slumbers? and there will come up a silent voice, saying that *there* man's boasted strength is turned to weakness and he can do no more. Go to the living, and ask them if they have power to give life to the dead? and they shall tell you that they have no such power.

Well, then, if man's resurrection from the dead depends upon God alone, and no human power can effect it; so must the state and condition of man depend equally upon God, and be equally beyond the reach of human agency. Suppose for instance, a man should set himself to work and attempt to get himself raised up from the dead with four arms instead of two. We should smile at the folly of the man, and call him a visionary enthusiast, *as a man destitute* of common sense. But really, is

there any thing absolutely more absurd in the supposition, that we can by our works procure a couple of bodily organs in the resurrection; than that these same works can procure us those *mental qualifications* there, on which our eternal happiness shall depend? Is there in reality any thing more preposterous in the supposition that God has made our corporeal organization in the resurrection, dependent upon our works, than in the idea, that he has suspended our mental or moral organization upon these works? I judge not, and the only reason why one appears more absurd than the other, may be found in the fact, that one is the countenance of an old acquaintance, while the other is that of a stranger.

The truth is, that man can by his faith and works do something toward ameliorating his condition here; but he cannot procure his resurrection from the dead; and if he cannot procure the thing itself, much less can he procure any modifications of it. *All* that man is, and *all* that he *can be* in the resurrection, he must owe to God alone; his feeble works cannot reach one line beyond the grave, nor can they make one hair black or white in the resurrection from the dead. That resurrection itself is the free gift of God, upon which man has no claim whatever, and all its blessings or joys, are also as perfectly free on the part of God, and equally unmerited on the part of man. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." "So when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh! death where is thy sting? Oh! grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be (not to us, or our faith or works) but unto

God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is the salvation which God has prepared for a world, and in this sense God is the Saviour of all men. Death the last enemy shall be destroyed, and man shall be saved from his power. And it is a remarkable fact, that this salvation is never spoken of as depending upon the agency of man, or any thing else but the power of God. "He shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body," and this shall be done by "the working of that mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

Brethren, "be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," and "think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that are to try you;" for if Paul and the early disciples "labored and suffered reproach because they trusted in the living God, who was the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believed," think not that ye shall escape the reproach of the world, if ye trust in the same God. But in the midst of all reproaches, hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, and the Lord make you perfect in every good word and work.

# SERMON XII.

## REPENTANCE.

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent." Mark vi. 12.

THERE is, perhaps, no subject which is more agitated in the religious world than that of repentance. It is not always the case, however, that the subject upon which most is said, is best understood. "Conversion," "regeneration," being "born again," "getting religion," "obtaining a hope," "experiencing a change," are phrases in common use, and they are, I believe, employed as about synonymous with repentance; and yet, if you were to ask what *precise*, and definite idea is attached to any of them, I imagine it would be somewhat difficult to obtain a very satisfactory answer. They are phrases, used in a vague and indefinite sense, to denote something that can be felt, but cannot be explained. Certain awful fears of the wrath and curse of God; some horrible feelings of despair, succeeded by a sudden and mysterious burst of light and joy, would embrace the amount of the meaning of these terms as they are generally employed.

That the doctrine of repentance is taught in the Bible, no man can doubt for a moment; and that the early disciples made it a somewhat prominent theme of their ministry, is evident from the text; for when they were sent out on their mission of love and mercy, the historian says, "they went out, and preached that men should

repent." Such being the importance of the subject, and such the general confusion of ideas in relation to it, I shall make it the business of this discourse to explain the nature and utility of repentance.

In relation to the first of these particulars, the nature of repentance, it may be observed that it is not, as some suppose, a mere sorrow for sin. The thief who is detected, and is on his way to the penitentiary, may be, and doubtless often is, very sorry that he committed the crime; but that is not repentance. The murderer, on the scaffold, is doubtless very sorry that he murdered; but that feeling of sorrow is very far from true repentance. So a man may become alarmed at his condition as a sinner. He may be told, and may believe, that he is exposed to the curse of God, and that he is every moment in danger of the deep damnation of hell; and from these considerations he may be very sorry that he has sinned; but such sorrow as this has little to do with true evangelical repentance. There is another, and a different kind of sorrow, which is far more useful. In these cases the sorrow is selfish, and proceeds from a view of the real or supposed personal evils consequent upon crime, rather than from a conviction of the ingratitude and wrong of the *crime itself.* In such a case, the thief or the murderer is more sorry that he has been detected, than that he has stolen or murdered, and the sinner regrets more that he must go to hell than that he has sinned against heaven.

But there is a sorrow which is concerned in repentance, which ought to be exercised by us all. It proceeds from a sense of guilt itself, rather than from any view of punishment. It results from a discovery of the great and abundant goodness of God, the excellency of *his law, and the strong* and immutable obligations we

are under to love, serve and obey God. The man who exercises this sorrow, *mourns* for his sin, on account of *its own guilt*, and the wickedness of the thing itself. He sees that it is wrong, and though God has not threatened to punish him at all for it, he would not grieve the less on that account. This is called in the scriptures "Godly sorrow." But even this is not repentance. The apostle says, "Godly sorrow *worketh* repentance," and of course even Godly sorrow cannot be, of itself, that repentance which it worketh. It is but one of the means which are useful in bringing about repentance; but it is not repentance itself.

Repentance, as taught in the Bible, is no more nor less than an actual turning from the love and practice of sin to the love and practice of virtue. I have no faith at all in a repentance which leaves a man as bad as it found him, or which affects him only on the sabbath or in the church. If a man has been unjust, and he learns to hate injustice, and turns from its practice to follow justice, in his intercourse with his fellow-men; that man has repented. If a man has been a drunkard, and turns from his drunkenness to the love and practice of temperance, that man has repented. And so of any and all the vices that degrade humanity. To repent is to turn from them, and commence and continue the practice of righteousness. It is to "break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by turning to the Lord." This is the Bible doctrine of repentance, and nothing short of this is worthy the name.

I regret to say that repentance, in the eyes of the world, at this day, has little or no connexion with the practice of man, in the every day business of life. It is a matter for the sabbath and for the church, rather than for the store, the workshop, the counting-house, or the

market-place. I shall be best understood by taking a single case, as an illustration. Here is a man who is a merchant, and though he is not an outrageous sinner, yet he loves money like most men, and is not over and above scrupulous about the means of obtaining it. He will recommend an article, which he wishes to sell, considerably above what truth will justify, and if he can make a good bargain by using a little deception, he does not hesitate to do so. He will overreach an ignorant customer, and take from him more than justice would give. He sometimes grinds the face of the poor, with whom he deals, and is not particular in regard to the wants or rights of others. I have known this man for some time, and finally in a time of excitement a mutual friend comes to me with much apparent satisfaction, and informs me that this man has repented. My reply is, I am glad of it, for he certainly needed repentance, as much as some others of my acquaintance. But really, sir, I have not seen the evidence of his repentance. I have been in his store frequently and have been acquainted with his practice, and truly I do not see but he continues to do about the same that he has done heretofore. He appears as anxious to make a good bargain as ever, and all his operations are carried on upon the same principles as formerly. True, I have noticed that his countenance has appeared a little elongated of late, and I thought perhaps he might have met with some loss that troubled him a little. I have also noticed, that he passed by me rather coolly; and in one or two instances, when a very large story was to be told, I have known him step aside and let a clerk tell it for him. But except a little more gloom of countenance, and some reserve of manner, I have seen no *particular change* in the man. Is it not possible that you

are mistaken about the fact of his having repented? Oh, no. He certainly has repented, for I was present when he "*got religion.*" He went to our church, and during a powerful sermon he was struck "under conviction," came forward for the prayers of God's people, and in due time was converted, and he is now a member of the church. Very well, I grant all that, the man might have been alarmed, and no doubt he felt much better when the alarm had subsided; but the *church* is the last place in the world any man should go, to ascertain who has, and who *has not* repented. I should be pleased to know what improvement you have seen in the man's subsequent conduct which leads you to the belief that he has repented? Why, he has been a regular attendant upon the Gospel ordinances every sabbath. He has prayed in his family every day, and is active in seeking the salvation of the souls of sinners around him. All this he has done, and there can be no doubt that he has repented.

All this may be very conclusive to some minds, but I must have another and a different kind of evidence before I can say that all my doubts are removed. The man may be very punctual at church, and very devout, so far as appearances are concerned, while there; and at the same time, be a very bad man when *out* of church. He may pray to be seen of men, and his very prayers be designed as a cloak for iniquity. He may manifest a great anxiety to save the souls of sinners; but I want to see him treat their *bodies* a little better before I can allow that the genuineness of his repentance is placed beyond all question. Has he ever said, as one of old, "Lo! the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing unlawfully from any *man, I restore* him fourfold." Where is the evidence

that he either loves justice better, or practises it more than formerly? Where is the evidence that he is a better husband and father; a more kind friend or a better citizen, or even a more honest man? Where is the man who will say of him "behold this man has returned to me the gold which he unjustly took from my purse?" Where are the poor, the widows and the fatherless, that have been benefited by his repentance, and can say now what they never said of him before, "behold our friend and benefactor, who fed us when we were hungry, and clothed us when we were naked?" Nay, where are the men of business who will point to his store, and say, "there lives the man who in former times would cheat us in a trade, but he has repented and is now an honest man. Let us turn in hither and buy, for he will not deceive us; his words are faithful and true, and no guile is found upon his tongue."

These are the evidences of repentance, and any thing short of this is but a spurious cheat, as far from the true evangelical repentance of the Bible as the east is from the west. I want a repentance which makes a man honest in his dealings, faithful and true to his word, kind and charitable to the poor, forgiving toward his enemies, and benevolent in his feelings and acts to all. Any thing that falls short of these effects I must reject as unworthy the name of repentance.

I may remark further, that repentance to be genuine and lasting must proceed from proper motives. Of these motives however, man cannot judge infallibly, for we can see only the outward act, but cannot penetrate the heart. A man may refrain from stealing because he is afraid of the penitentiary, and still be a thief at heart, and scarcely less guilty than if he had actually laid his *hand unlawfully* upon his neighbour's goods. So a man

may correct some of the irregularities of his life because he is afraid of hell or the Devil, and still remain as much in love with sin as ever, but this is not genuine repentance.

The Apostle preached "repentance toward God," not towards hell, or the prince of Darkness; and I confess I have little confidence in a repentance which proceeds from fear of punishment of any kind. The repentance of the Gospel has *God* for its object, and the true penitent thinks little or nothing of the punishment that is due him for his sins. His eye is fixed on God and he sees in him so much of purity and goodness that he abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. He feels that he has sinned against a Father's love, which has followed him all his life long, and he loathes sin for its own sake, and turns from it with disgust to run with cheerful alacrity in the path of duty.

These are in brief, my views of repentance. Relative to the long agitated question, whether repentance is the work of God's irresistible power, or of the agency of man, or of both conjoined, I have but little to say. It may suffice to remark, that repentance is as much the work of the creature, as any other act of a man's life. Man repents as he does every other act, under the influence of motives. Take away all motives from man and he will neither repent nor do any thing else.

Suppose, for the sake of an illustration, a man sees a quantity of gold in such a situation that he can steal it and appropriate it to his own use. He is the creature of infirmity, the temptation is strong, and he finally takes that which is not his own. Now in that act there is evidently no need of a special and immediate interposition of the irresistible power of God. On the contrary the motives presented are fully sufficient to account

for the act. After he has obtained the gold he begins to reflect seriously upon his ways. He sees that he has violated one of those sacred principles on which the happiness and even the existence of civil society depend. He feels that he has perhaps beggared a friend, disgraced himself and family, and above all that he has sinned against God, and laid the foundation for years of remorse and misery. All these things operate as motives and press it heavily upon him, to return his ill gotten gain, and forsake his sin. He finally resolves to return the gold to its owner, and carries that resolution into effect, and henceforward he walks in the way of honesty and justice. That was repentance, and it was as much the act of that man's agency as any other act of his life. There was no more need of the special and irresistible power of God to induce that man to return the money, than there was to make him steal it in the first instance. In both cases he acted as man always acts under the influence of motives, and these motives are in my judgement fully sufficient to account for the whole matter, without the necessity of bringing in a special interposition of the power of God.

I do not deny the agency of God in the work of repentance nor in any thing else, for it is "in him we live and move and have our being." I joyfully recognise the evidence of his presence and power in every breath that moves our heaving lungs; and I know that without him we can do nothing. But the idea I wish to impress upon your minds is, that God in the economy of his grace, as in every thing else, works by *means*. His gospel is the instrument of working repentance, and when its vast power is applied, it is able to do the work, and hence there is no more need of a special interposition of his *power to produce* repentance, than in bringing about any

other of the plans of his gracious providence, the means of which he has already appointed.

These being my views of that matter, I lay them before you in all frankness, because I would, if I could, persuade men to repent, and strip them of that excuse which is so often heard, that they cannot repent, for repentance must be wrought by the power of God, and they must wait for him to work. I tell you that you have the same ability to repent that you have to do any thing else, and it is high time that every one of us should set about that work in sober earnest, with a full determination that depending upon God, as we should in all cases, we will subdue every unhallowed passion, forsake every known sin, and practice every known virtue.

I have already said that repentance consists not in feelings alone, but in an actual turning from the practice of sin to the practice of virtue. It may be proper to show that this is a scriptural view of the subject. You will doubtless recollect that our blessed Saviour introduced the case of two servants as illustrations of the duty of repentance. They were both commanded to do a certain service. One said, I go, and went not. But the other said, I go not, and afterward he repented and went. He did not repent of what he had said and still refused to obey, but he repented and went and performed the work, and he was justified, while the other was condemned. Now this approval is good evidence that Jesus considered that repentance, and that only as genuine, which consisted in doing the works that God commanded.

But I need not dwell at greater length on this part of the subject, for I presume I am already understood. I say yet, once more, good works, of an undoubted and undying character; works of justice, kindness, benevolence, charity, and truth, are the only

evidence of genuine repentance; and to these must the appeal be made, if we would determine with any tolerable degree of certainty, whether a man has, or has not repented.

It may be said, as it has often been said, that men may be good moral men, from interested motives; from a love of popularity, or a good name. My answer is, that the thing is possible, but that is not my business. I cannot judge men's motives in all cases. The Saviour says, "ye shall know them by their fruits." "Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles." Hence, when I find the good fruit, I am bound to admit that the tree is good also.

I come now to speak of the utility of repentance.

What benefits will result to us from an exercise of true repentance? Will repentance save us from endless wo in another world? I answer, no—for the best of all possible reasons; that in the economy of God's government and grace, man never stood exposed to any such calamity; and it is idle to say that repentance, or any thing else, can save us from something of which we were never in danger. When it shall have been proved that God has placed man in danger of such a fate, it will be time enough to talk of being saved from it by repentance. As that has not yet been proved, we will not enter further upon a discussion of that matter.

Will repentance secure for us the joys of a blessed immortality in heaven? I answer, no—for that was secured by the immutable promise of him that cannot lie, from the foundation of the world, and is the *free gift* of God, bestowed upon man, not as the *reward* of works, but as the free bounty of a benevolent and good Creator. Does any man hope for a state of endless bliss on account of *his repentance* or works? If so, he may for ever rest

assured that his is any thing else but the hope of a Christian. God has laid in Zion a corner stone, tried and precious, and upon that our hopes must be reared, or they will fail in the day of trial. *That stone* is Christ, who rose triumphant over the power of death, and brought life and immortality to light; thus giving us hope that as he lives, so shall we live also. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid," and he that rejects this foundation to build upon his own works, will find to his cost, that he is building a tottering Babel that cannot abide the wind or the storm.

But the objector is ever ready to ask, if your doctrine is true, and we are all to be saved at last, what is the use of repentance? I answer plainly to the point. Repentance will give to man, in all cases,

"The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy."

It will make a man calm, contented, and happy in life, resigned and joyful in sickness, and triumphant in death. It will save a man *here*, from those dreadful miseries that are always mingled in the cup of wickedness. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, but they are as the troubled ocean, whose waters cast up mire and dirt continually." He that repents of all sin, and walks with obedient footsteps in the way of righteousness, is saved from these sorrows, and receives as the rich reward of his labor that perfect peace which is the inheritance of those, and those only, who keep the law of God. Say what you will of the pleasures of the wicked, with the Bible and the experience of the world before me, I boldly declare, that there is no happy man on earth, but the good man. He lives at peace with *himself*, and the world. He enjoys communion with *God*, and the spirits of the just. His ways are ways of

pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. He fears not the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and wasteth at noonday, for God is with him. He is humble in prosperity, peaceful and calm in adversity. The blessing of him that was ready to perish comes upon him while living, and at last, in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe, he is gathered to his fathers; and as he stands upon the brink of the grave, he looks back upon a life well spent, without a sigh, or a tear, and peacefully goes down to the tomb, with the blessings and the benedictions of children and the community upon his memory.

Is there no good in all this? Is there nothing in virtue itself that is desirable, that man should love it for its own sake? Or is man so far gone, that he must be considered incapable of appreciating that which is lovely and good, and to be brought to virtue by the mercenary hope of an extra reward in another world; or driven to its practice by the slavish fear of hell and the devil? Must the fear of that "hangman's whip," be constantly before our eyes, to keep us in awe, that we curse not God to his face?

Lay another world altogether out of the question, and see if you canot discover any motive to repentance. Go to the drunkard, and mark the wreck of happiness over which he mourns. Behold him reeling from his midnight carousals to his wretched abode. Mark him when the effervescence of the glass is gone, and in moments of calm reflection, he sits him down to contemplate his ways. He sees the tears of a family falling around him, and feels that he is the guilty cause of their woes; and as for himself, he is comfortless and poor, and must soon go down to that grave, at which the hand of affection will rear no stone to tell of its inmate. He knows

that he is whirling with fearful haste, down to the abodes of death, and that for his wife and children naught but poverty remains. Is there no motive for him to repent? Would it do no good for him to dash the cup from his lips, and live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this world?" Ah! yes. It would change that abode of wretchedness to a blooming paradise of joy. It would dry up those falling tears, and give to the penitent himself, firmness of body, and peace of mind, that he can never enjoy while engaged in the practice of sin.

The same, or similar remarks will apply to every species and form of sin; for though the effects of this are more outward and visible than in some other cases, they are not more bitter, certain, or sure. Disguise it as you will, *all sin is misery*. There is sorrow in every cup that vice presents to her votaries. She may mingle it as she will, to make it sweet to the taste; death and misery are there, and when drank, it will be wormwood, *gall* and *bitterness* in the system. God has bound sin and misery together by a tie that no man can put asunder, and he that practises the one must feel the other.

There is still another idea, that should not be passed over. The joys of hope in the Gospel are sweet, and these can only be truly enjoyed by the man who repents of sin with full purpose of heart. Men may speculate and theorize as they will; but the truth is, there is such a damning power in sin, that it will always prevent the enjoyment of faith, however correctly it may be held in theory. Suspicion and doubt are always the companions of guilt. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion." Fearful forebodings *of the future*, and dark and dreadful recollections of the *past, will* crowd upon the mind of the guilty, and though

he may lock his crimes in the secrecy of his own heart, yet in the darkness of the silent night, they will haunt him as ghosts of despair, and plant thorns in the pillow upon which he vainly strives to rest his weary head. The light of truth may shine around him, but it has no charms for him. He cannot live at ease—he cannot die in peace, for there is a canker-worm gnawing at the very root of the tree of happiness. "Repent, then, and be converted every one of you, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," and through all coming life,

> "Know then this truth, enough for man to know,
> That virtue alone is happiness below."

## SERMON XIII.

### FAITH.

"For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" Romans iii. 3.

THE scriptures of the New Testament everywhere insist upon the necessity of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So frequently is faith urged upon the reader, that even the tyro in Christian knowledge would readily inform you that it is absolutely necessary to believe. But the precise nature and utility of faith, and the consequences of unbelief, are subjects not so generally nor so well understood. To explain and illustrate these points shall be the business of this discourse, and without further introductory remarks, I come to that work.

I. What is the nature of Christian faith?

My reply is, that faith is the assent which the mind gives to the truth of a proposition, from the force of real or supposed evidence, presented to the understanding, and it will always be weak or strong, in proportion as the evidence appears to be conclusive or otherwise. *Christian faith* is a belief in the mission and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so far as the nature of the thing itself is concerned, it differs not from faith in any thing else. If I should inform you that I had recently seen a friend of yours, you would be likely to believe *me*. That belief is faith, and it will be weak or strong *in proportion* to your confidence in my veracity. The

same in its nature is faith in Christ. The same, in fact, is all faith, and the only imaginable difference in different cases, is not in the thing itself, but in the subjects upon which it is employed. Christ claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the divinely appointed messenger of his Father's grace and truth, and the Saviour of the world. He gives you, as proof that he is what he professes to be, the fulfilment of the ancient promises in him, and appealing to his works—to the signs and miracles and wonders that God wrought by him, in the midst of the people, and to his triumphant resurrection from the dead—he shows that his mission is divine, and that with him is the mighty power of God. By this evidence the judgement is convinced, and from its throne gives out the decision: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is faith, and it is produced by the same means, and is in its nature the same as faith exercised upon any other subject. The evidence of these miracles is conclusive; the record is given us by men who were eye-witnesses, and whose characters slander itself dare not assail. With such evidence as this, men may believe with an undoubted faith, and there is no more need of a miracle or of any supernatural agency to produce faith in Christ, than to secure faith in any thing else, which you receive on the strength of evidence.

If your friend informs you that he saw a man perform a certain act, you can believe him without any special interposition of divine power. So, if you are informed on good authority, that about eighteen hundred years ago, there appeared in Judea a man called Jesus, who claimed to be sent of God, and sustained his claims by signs and miracles, and by his own resurrection from the *dead; if the historians* inform you that they were with

him, and saw the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dead come forth from the grave at his word; that they knew him well, and saw him expire upon the cross, and were the eye-witnesses of his resurrection; you can believe *that* also; and there is no more need of a special interposition of God's spirit to produce faith in one case than the other. The one is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the other is faith in your friend, and both are produced by the force of evidence.

I make these remarks, because it has long been fashionable to mystify the subject of faith by involving it in the mists of metaphysical subtleties, and logical niceties. Hence we hear of "divine faith," and "human faith," "historical faith," and "temporal faith," and I know not what else; and men have labored much in drawing out nice hair-splitting distinctions between these various kinds of faith. It is all "vanity and vexation of spirit," a mere play upon words without profit. All faith is one and indivisible in nature, differing only in degree, and in the objects upon which it is employed.

The opinion that Christian faith is entirely different from any other kind of faith, and beyond the reach of human agency, is pernicious in the extreme. It induces men to stand complaining of their want of faith, and praying for more, and waiting for some strange and divine afflatus to come like the shock of a galvanic battery, and give them all faith in a moment. This keeps men weak and sickly in the Christian life. If a man wants more faith, let him *work* as well as pray. Let him candidly and perseveringly gird himself to the work of a patient examination of the evidences, on which the Gospel rests its claims for our credence. He will *thus find* that the Gospel has laid its foundation on the

immovable rocks of eternal truth, he will know what he believes, and *why* he believes, and with an enlightened mind he will drink in the waters of living faith, fresh from the everlasting spring, and rejoice that the foundation of God standeth sure and steadfast. Does any man lack faith, I say again, let him work as well as pray; for I am certain that calm and patient investigation of the evidences of revealed religion, is the best antidote to skepticism. The spectres of infidelity will flee before it as chaff before the wind.

Let it be borne in mind then, that Christian faith takes cognizance of the mission, death, resurrection, and teachings of Jesus Christ, and is, in its nature, simply the assent which the mind gives to the truth of these things, from the force of evidence, and will, in each case, be weak or strong, in proportion as the evidence is understood and appreciated. I pass to inquire,

II. What is the utility of Christian faith?

In answering this question, there are two extremes into which men have run. On the one hand it is thought that no man can be saved without faith, and that the eternal destinies of the world are suspended upon the conditions of faith or unbelief. This is one extreme. On the other hand, it is thought by some, that Christian faith is entirely useless, and men are as well off without as with it. This is another extreme, and it will appear in the sequel, that the truth lies between the two.

The fallacy of the first of these positions is evident from the single consideration that truth is immutable and exists independent of the faith or unbelief of man. If faith is what I have said it is, the assent of the mind to the truth of the Gospel, then evidently the Gospel must exist beforehand, and its truth or falsity can in no

way be affected by faith, which is always ex-post facto.

For instance:—It is either true that Christ came and suffered, and labored, and died, and rose from the dead, or it is not. If it is not true, then my faith cannot make it so. But, if it be true that he thus came, then it would be equally true even though the whole world should refuse to believe it.

Again. I suppose it is this day true, that you and I will either be saved or lost. If it be true that we are to be lost, then, surely, no faith can save us; and if it be true that we are to be saved, then it is equally certain, that no want of faith in us can make it untrue. Hence then, I conclude, that the sentiment which teaches that man can make or unmake God's truth at pleasure, and that men are to be saved in another world because they are fortunate enough to believe it is so, or lost because they believe it is not so, is grossly absurd and utterly unphilosophical.

Look at the subject in another light. Millions on millions of the human family have never heard even the name of Christ. They bow down before dumb idols and worship the works of their own hands. They pay their devotions in temples whose inmates never yet dreamed that such a being as Jesus of Nazareth, ever had an existence. Besides all this, even in Christian countries there are many, very many, who go down to the grave in infancy, or in the early morning of their existence, ere yet their minds are capable of exercising faith in Christ, or of understanding his doctrines. All these must be lost, if it be true that none but believers can be saved; for they all die without faith.

I ask you—Is there consistency or reason, or even humanity, in a doctrine which teaches that God will curse

with endless wo, "the distant islands of the sea," merely because they did not believe on him, of whose name they have never heard, and of whose religion, the very circumstances in which God has placed them, compel them to be as profoundly ignorant as they are of the inhabitants of the distant stars? Is it reasonable to suppose, that a God of all perfection and goodness, will curse all who die in infancy, merely because he saw proper to take them out of the world before they were capable of exercising faith in the Gospel? These are necessary and unavoidable conclusions from the position, that God has made faith a condition of future salvation, and I warn you not to embrace that position, unless you are prepared to go the whole length, and damn all who do not come up to the condition.

But let us turn our attention to the Scriptures, and see what light we can gather from them, upon the subject in question. "What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid! Yea, let God be true and every man a liar." I may remark, here, that the word rendered faith in the last clause of the text, is the same that is often translated faithfulness, and that it should have been so translated in this instance, is evident from the consideration that God cannot be said to have faith in the common acceptation of the term. To him all things are distinctly and infallibly known, and hence nothing can be a matter of faith with him. In the new and improved version of the testament, the passage reads thus: "What if some had not faith? Shall their want of faith make the faithfulness of God of no effect? By no means, rather let God be true, though every man be a liar."

The doctrine of the text is, therefore, evidently this:— "That faith in man can have no effect upon the faith-

fulness of God. Though some do not believe, yet God is faithful and true." The controversy ought then, in reality, to be with the Apostle, and not with me, for when I assert that a want of faith cannot cause God's faithfulness to fail, I am but repeating the clear and unquestionable doctrine of my text.

But there are on record some facts, that can be heard upon this subject, and to them I will appeal for a further illustration of the truth of my position. When God speaks either a threatening or a promise, he is faithful to his word, and I propose to look back for a moment and inquire what effect faith or unbelief has had upon the faithfulness of God, as manifested in the fulfilment of his threatenings of punishment upon the guilty.

Look at the years beyond the flood, and learn wisdom from the fate of the Antediluvians. They had become grossly corrupt and hopelessly wicked, and God threatened to destroy them with a flood. He commissioned Noah to make known this, his determination, and accordingly while the ark was in preparation he preached righteousness to the people, and warned them, that God had threatened to sweep them from the face of the earth by a flood. But they heeded him not. His admonitions passed as the idle wind, and his words were to them as one that mocked. They believed not, but God was faithful. The rushing torrents of water, the open windows of heaven, the broken fountains of the great deep, and the desolated earth bore witness, that when God speaks, he is faithful to the performance of his word, though man believes not.

Take another illustration. The children of Jacob lived in peace, for aught that would appear to the contrary, until there came an intimation that God would *raise Joseph* above his brethren. The brethren would

not believe that such a thing would be brought to pass, and in order to make sure work of it, they sold him a slave into Egypt. But mark the wonders of the divine power. God's purpose was fulfilled, and even the very means that they employed in their blindness to justify their unbelief, were made the instruments of manifesting the divine faithfulness, and proving that God is not less true when men reject his truth than when they receive it by faith.

The case of the Jews in the days of the Saviour, will afford you another illustration of the point in hand. God by the mouth of his prophets had threatened against them, the most severe and extraordinary judgements. He had forewarned them, that their city and their temple should be destroyed, and the whole nation should be scattered, a proverb and a by-word among all people. Jesus came and sounded the alarm, informing them that the day of their downfall was drawing nigh; that even upon that generation, there should come a time of trouble, such as had not been from the beginning of the world to that same time, and upon their heads should fall all the righteous blood that had been shed upon the face of the earth. But they did not believe, and though he wrought many mighty works in confirmation of his mission, yet they rejected him and finally put him to death. Yet God was faithful to his word. Jerusalem was surrounded with armies, the glory of her temple was laid low, and the nation itself rent in fragments and scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Now in reference to all these instances, we may with propriety ask, "What if some did not believe? Did their unbelief make the faithfulness of God of no effect?" And the obvious answer is "By no means." Nor is *there any conceivable* influence, that their unbelief ex-

erted upon the firm and immutable counsels of God. God spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast, and though man refused to believe, yet was God found to be faithful to his word.

But I need not dwell here, for the great mass of professors are perfectly willing to grant, and do in fact believe, that the faith or the unbelief of man, can have no influence upon the faithfulness of God so far as the threatenings of his law are concerned. Though the whole world should refuse to believe, yet would God execute them every one. And yet, strange as it may appear, when we come to the "*sure mercies of David*," and the blessings promised in the covenant of eternal mercy and truth, we shall be told, that God will not bestow the blessings, because man, in his blindness, does not believe that he intends to do so! Will it please some man well skilled in the mysteries of the day, to inform us what good reason there is for supposing, that God will be less faithful in the performance of his promises of grace than in the execution of the threatenings of his law? The light of heaven never shone upon a darker inconsistency than this. When God threatened to destroy the old world, he was faithful and true, notwithstanding their unbelief. But when he promises to pour down the waters of salvation like an overflowing stream from on high, until they shall cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the sea—Ah! then we begin to hear of faith, and of the power of unbelief to prevent the fulfilment of the gracious word! When God threatened to *scatter* the Jews among all people, he was faithful, and the work was done, though they believed not; but when he promises to *gather* them all together again and with them the fulness of the Gentiles; yea, when he lifts his *immortal* hand and swears by himself, because there is

none greater, that in Christ, he will bless "all *nations* and kindreds, and families of the earth;" then we hear, that it is all suspended upon the contingency of faith, and that God cannot fulfil the promise, because man will not believe. I pray you think of these things, and if in all the threatenings of his word, God is faithful and true though men do not believe, what wonderful sagacity is this by which you have discovered, or by what rule of logic have you come to the conclusion, that God is not equally faithful in his promises of salvation even though men do not believe?

Shall I be told, that these promises are conditional and the condition is faith? I appeal to the promises themselves, and they shall refute the assertion. The promise to Abraham is called by the Apostle, the Gospel which was preached to that Patriarch, and thus it reads: "By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, *surely* in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and he shall possess the gates of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed." There is no intimation that this promise depends for its fulfilment upon the faith of man.

The apostle speaks of its stability thus: "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by none greater, he swore by *himself*, that by two immutable things, in which it was *impossible for God to lie*, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor to the soul *sure* and *steadfast*."

Again, hear the word of the Lord. "I have sworn by myself, the word hath gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee *shall bow*, and every tongue shall swear, surely shall

say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Is there aught in such language as this, to countenance the idea, that the promised blessing was made dependent upon man's faith, or that it would be withheld if men did not believe? You know the answer that truth must give, and I leave it with you, satisfied that you will answer it correctly.

I have now told you what faith *cannot* do. It cannot make God more faithful, nor a want of it cause his faithfulness to fail; and I presume there are some of my hearers who will be ready to slide into the opposite extreme, and say, that if I am right, then faith is of no use at all. There are many who cannot see what on earth should induce Universalists to preach, or exert themselves at all to make men believe. If, say they, your doctrine be true, and God will bless and save all men in another world, whether they believe or not, pray what is the use of faith, or what difference does it make whether a man believes or not? This is a question often asked, and it shall now be my business fairly and fully to answer it.

I. Faith saves man from the darkness and gloom of atheism.

I can hardly imagine a more miserable condition for man than to be without hope and without God in the world. The child whose parent has gone down to the grave, and who is left an orphan, claims our pity. He looks around him, and there is none to whom he can go for protection and help. He looks to the future, and knows that the path before him is beset with thorns on every side, and "dangers stand thick through all the way." He feels that he must tread that path alone, and single-handed meet the ills of life, while doubt and *gloom brood* over the result. As feels that orphan, so

feels the man who looks up to heaven, and knows no Father there. He sees chaos and confusion around him, and he knows that soon "life's busy day will be o'er," and believes that the hour that lays his head in the dust, will witness the eternal end of all his hopes and joys—nay, of his existence itself.

Now, Christian faith saves men from this darksome gloom. It fills the throne of the universe with a God of infinite wisdom and goodness, and sheds a halo of glory over all the things of earth, for it presents them all as under the direction and control of a being too wise to err, and too good to do an injury to any of his creatures. It plants in the heart a child-like confidence in God, and makes man feel like the child that is encircled in the arms of a merciful father.

II. It saves from the wretchedness, degradation and misery of superstition and idolatry.

There are few men on earth, who have so far divested themselves of those feelings of dependance, inherent in human nature, as to deny the existence of a God. But it unfortunately happens that many believe in, and worship gods worse than none, whose existence is to them the most bitter curse they have to deplore. The gods of the heathen are, for the most part, tyrants of the worst stamp. Wrath that burns exceedingly hot, and cruelty that sheds not a tear, and heaves not a sigh, over the woes of humanity, are the most prominent features of their character. Before them the slave cringes with fear and trembling, and the crouching menial howls in deep despair. On their altars victims bleed and die, and humanity shudders around to witness deeds of blood and cruelty. We, to be sure, are far removed from such scenes, and think little of them; but yet it is a *melancholy truth*, that there is not a wind that blows,

which does not waft the deep wailings of suffering ignorance; nor does the thunder utter its voice but it is taken as the signal for keener pains, and greater and more heart-rending sacrifices upon the altars of superstition.

Faith in the Gospel saves from this ignorance, and all its attendant train of cruelties, miseries, and immoralities. It makes the temple of worship the hallowed sanctuary of joy, and diffuses all abroad in society an influence, that softens and refines, and brings man up to the true dignity of his nature. I ask the hearer to compare the condition of the Christian worshipper, with that of the deluded mortal who bows down at the shrine of idolatry, and behold the work of faith. I ask you to compare our own country, with those barbarous nations where the light of Christianity never shone, and ask what makes the difference? It is faith, and nothing else, that has wrought that difference. Christian faith has gone forth in its power, and changed the "tiger to the lamb, and the vulture to the dove." All that we are, above the pagan, who casts himself down to be crushed beneath the wheels of an idol's car, we owe to the Gospel of Christ. Faith has done it all, and but for that faith, you and I would this day have bowed down to gods of wood and stone.

III. Faith saves from doubt and fear of the future.

The future is dark and gloomy to the mind that is not enlightened by the knowledge of Christ. The grave yawns in darkness at our feet, and what awaits us beyond that narrow house, no mortal man can tell. But faith speaks, and life dawns upon the death of the grave, and the vision of a world redeemed from sin and death, and made holy and happy in the heavenly kingdom, bursts upon our view. Sin is destroyed, death conquered, and all created humanity delivered from

bondage, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Do you ask me then what faith can do? My answer is, it can save man from error, superstition, sin, misery, and fear. It can give us good hope and everlasting consolation, keep us humble in prosperity, sustain us in adversity, direct us in all difficulties, support us in sickness, and put a song of victory upon our tongues in the hour of death. It can make the dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are, and when heart and flesh has failed, and the dim eye has closed upon all the beauties of earth, and the frail body lies silent in the grave, it can linger around the house of mourning, and pour its heavenly consolations into the bleeding bosoms of the afflicted—wipe the falling tear from the eye of the widow, and hush the moan of her fatherless children, with its inspiring hopes. Oh! ye afflicted and poor, ye sick and ye sorrowful, ye mourning sons and daughters of sorrow, hold fast the priceless treasures of faith. It is

> "A sovereign balm for every wound,
> A cordial for your fears."

Hold it fast, and by no means let it go. And ye, who are without hope and without God in the world; ye who are thoughtless and giddy and who care for none of these things, seek ye a living faith as the greatest of all earthly blessings. The day is coming when you will need it. Misfortunes will befall you, your earthly hopes will be blasted, and then you will need the sustaining power of faith. But if you could escape these, still there is a solemn day coming when you will feel your need of a faith so much divine. Sickness and pain will overtake you. Those rosy cheeks will be pale—those sparkling eyes *will be sunken* and dim—that blooming countenance will

be haggard and ghastly, and that form, so erect and beautiful, will be emaciated and poor upon a dying bed. Some friendly voice will whisper in thy ear the solemn truth, that the day of thy death draweth nigh, and the hour of thy departure is at hand. Then, if not before, will you feel your need of faith in a better and happier land. Oh! for God's sake, and for your own sake, lay up treasures against a day like this, and let your prayer be,

"Oh! for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what Jehovah saith,
To hear the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heaven our own."

## SERMON XIV.

### INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSALISM.

"Come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Numbers x. 29.

In my previous lectures, I have endeavored to prove the truth of the great and leading doctrines of that system of faith, which is known under the name of Universalism. In the present discourse I intend to lay before you, an exposition of the influence which I suppose these doctrines are calculated to exercise, upon the hearts and the lives of those who believe.

There is perhaps no one question more frequently put by the opposers of the doctrine of Universal Salvation, than this, what good will it do to preach or believe it, even if it be true? The question is an important one, and it shall be treated with all that candor which its importance so obviously demands.

I profess to you that I would not advocate a system which I did not most religiously believe calculated to promote the interests of man. But believing as I do, most heartily, that every man, woman and child, would be benefited by faith in the doctrine of impartial grace, I am constrained to proclaim it in the midst of obloquy and reproach, and to cry unto you with affectionate earnestness, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." If you ask me *what good* it would do you to *believe in this* doctrine? My answer is,

I. It would increase your happiness.

I make this remark, with the intention of applying it in its broadest and most literal sense. I make no exceptions, but I say there is no human being who would not be made more happy by a living faith in the immortal purity and everlasting felicity of the whole human family. I care not what your present faith may be; I care not whether you agree, at present, with the atheist, deist, skeptic, or with any one of the numerous denominations of professing christians; one thing I know, you have not a faith which presents more glorious hopes, or more heart-cheering anticipations than Universalism, and it is impossible for you to *invent one* that shall do so. Immortality and perfect unalloyed felicity for all created intelligences, is the "*summum bonum*," the "*ne plus ultra*" of all good, beyond which imagination itself cannot proceed. I say, therefore, there is no man among you, who would not be made happier by a firm faith in a system which promises all that the benevolent heart can wish, and even more than the most lively imagination can conceive. Let us see if I am not right here.

Suppose you are an atheist; you believe that this beautiful world came into existence by chance, or sprang from the operation of the laws of matter; and that all its vast concerns are going on at hap-hazard, or are subject only to the laws of nature. And as for yourself, you are but the being of a day, the offspring of chance, ushered into life, like the insect whose wing glitters in the sunbeam, to sport your little hour, and die to live no more. You look upward to heaven, and there is no Father there. You look around you, and all is confusion. You look forward, and all is darkness and gloom. You look downward, and the grave yawns at your feet, *and the high*est hope you have, is that there you will

soon feed the greedy worm, and moulder back to your native dust!

Need I compare such a faith with that of the christian, in order to show that so far as its influence upon human happiness is concerned, the latter is as much above the former, as the heavens are above the earth. I trust such a work is unnecessary, for I have seen the atheist, or at least the man who professed to have no faith in a God, and from his own lips have I had the confession of the happifying influence of the christian faith. Never did I see the man of this sort who would not say to me, "Sir, I wish I could believe as you do, for could I look up to heaven, and feel that I had a friend and a father there, who would take care of me all my life long, and crown me with immortality at last, I know I should be a happier, if not a better man." I say then that Universalism heartily believed, would make the atheist more happy than he can be without it.

But suppose you are a deist; you believe in the God of nature, and in his general providence, but you have no idea that he stoops to converse with man, or to reveal to him his character or purposes. You know that you must die, and have no hope that you shall live again. The day of your death is the boundary of all your expectations, and you have no idea that you shall live at all beyond the grave. To you heaven is a dream, and immortality a fable. Your children and friends are dying around you, and when you part with them you part to meet no more, and you expect soon to close your own eyes upon all the endearments of earth, and bid a sad and eternal farewell to friends and friendship, to hope and happiness, nay, even to existence itself.

I am willing to grant that this faith is better than *atheism, for* there is some little comfort to be derived

from the thought that the affairs of this world are *measurably* under the government and control of a wise and good creator and governor. But I utter a philosophical, as well as a scriptural truth, when I say that this cannot satisfy the desires of the mind, or still those yearnings after immortality which are inwoven with the very constitution of the human soul. Man is so made, that he must *necessarily* and *unavoidably* look forward to the future, and hope or fear.

> "The soul uneasy and confined from home,
> Rests and expatiates in the world to come."

I have said that this is with man *unavoidable*, for I believe that he can no more avoid looking into the future, than he can avoid looking backward and remembering the past. But whether it be absolutely unavoidable or not, is of little consequence to our present argument. There is no doubt of the fact, that all men everywhere do draw upon the future for, sources of enjoyment; and there is just as little doubt that a large share of human happiness is derived from anticipation. Some have gone so far as to maintain, that the pleasure derived from anticipated good, is greater than that produced by the actual possession of the good itself. However this may be, it is nevertheless, positively certain, that hope opens rich fountains of happiness to man; and hence it follows, that any system which limits the sphere of hope to a few years, and cuts it short at death, must deprive man of one of the richest sources of happiness. But I need not argue this question, for I know not that it is often disputed, that a firm hope in future and immortal blessedness, is a blessing well calculated to promote the *happiness of* man. I may add, that this is a fountain *which remains* full and overflowing, at the very time

when it is needed most, when all other sources of felicity have failed.

To the deist, then, we say, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." We will give thee a hope that shall make thee happy. We will inspire thee with confidence in God, as a friend, in whom we may at all times trust without fear of danger or disappointment. We will give thee a hope that shall cheer thee in life, grow brighter and brighter, as the lamp of life burns dim and feeble; sustain thee in affliction, and give thee a triumphant song of victory, when death shall claim his tribute.

Suppose, again, you are a Christian; but have unfortunately embraced those narrow views of the economy of your Father's grace, that so extensively and unhappily prevail in the church, at the present day. You believe that "God from all eternity, has elected some men to be redeemed and everlastingly saved by Christ Jesus, and the remainder he was pleased to pass by, and ordain to dishonor and wrath, to the praise of his vindictive justice." Can such a faith make you calmly and peacefully happy in life, and resigned and joyous in the hour of death? I doubt it much, because, in the first place, you cannot *know* for a positive *certainty* that you are one of the very and precious elect of God; and so long as there is a lingering doubt upon that question, you must be measurably unhappy. But, in the second place, even if it were possible to remove all doubt upon that question, even *that* would not be fully satisfactory. There are ties that bind you to your fellow-creatures, and give you a deep and abiding interest in their welfare. I will therefore view your case in the most favorable light. I will suppose that your election is sure, *and you are persuaded*, beyond the possibility of a doubt,

that *your* name is enrolled among the number of the precious elect of God. I ask, can even this satisfy you? Is there no soul out of the ark of safety in whose welfare you feel an interest? Are there not those around you that you love? And have you no heart to feel for them? I ask, how is it, when you look upon a cherished child of your love, and behold the indelible mark of reprobation stamped upon its countenance? Ah, I know how it is. Your feelings are like those of the good old patriarch, when the bloody coat was brought home, and he knew it belonged to his darling Joseph; and he refused to be comforted, saying, "I will go down to the grave, to my son, mourning." No man can be fully satisfied with a faith which presents him with a reasonable probability, nay, an absolute certainty, that myriads of his fellow-creatures, and perhaps among them his own children, will fall victims to a hopeless decree of utter and eternal reprobation.

I grant that, with such views, you may at times enjoy a kind of satisfaction in the hope that dear and beloved self is safe; but that any man who has a head to reason, and a heart to feel, can possibly be *as* happy with such a faith, as he would be with one that embraced the *whole world* in the sure and steadfast covenant of redeeming grace, is altogether out of the question.

But I will make another supposition. You have rejected the notion of election and reprobation. You now believe that God *offers* salvation freely to all his creatures; and that they may all be saved, if they will comply with the conditions of grace. Those who comply with these conditions will be saved, and those who do *not comply* will be lost. The question is, whether this *faith is best* calculated to promote human happiness? I

judge not, for no man can be *positively certain* that he has, and that he will, to the end of his life, continue to do all those things on which his eternal all depends. So long as there is doubt upon that head, it will be a constant source of misery. In fact, the foundation of hope in this system, is far more unsubstantial than in the other. The man who believes in sovereign election, if he can satisfy himself that he is elected, can rest secure in the steadfast hope that he will be saved, and that no power in heaven or earth can prevent it. But it is a large discount from this, to embrace a faith which puts us in jeopardy every hour, lest some false step of ours should plunge us in ceaseless perdition.

But I will do here as in the other case. I will place the matter in its most favorable aspect before you. You are now satisfied of your own safety, and there remains no lingering doubt that when you depart from this world, your soul will wing its way to the realms of eternal blessedness and joy. Is that all you want? And are you now satisfied, and perfectly happy? Dear man! Have you no wife? No children? No friends? No human being that you love? If you have, where are your bowels of mercy and your feelings of compassion, that you can be happy while the storm of endless wrath is gathering, fearful and dark, and their unsheltered heads are exposed, naked, to its fury? I know not but you may be comfortable with such a faith, but I do know, from bitter experience, that I could not. And that any man, who loves his neighbour as himself, can be *as* happy with such a faith, as he would be with one that promises life and immortality to a world, is absolutely impossible.

The man who cherishes such a faith, may have seasons of joy. He may have occasional gleamings of sun-

shine, but the broad daylight of felicity, pure and perpetual, he may not expect. He may reflect upon heaven and its glories, its songs of joy and anthems of ceaseless praise, and the prospect of obtaining a habitation there, may cause him to rejoice. But he must also look at the other side of the picture; and when he thinks of *hell*, with all its horrors, its dire music of misery, and its groans of everlasting despair, and remembers that himself, or his children, may one day be there, his soul dies within him, and his joy is turned to mourning. He finds in the thought, as did the eloquent Saurin, "A mortal poison, diffusing itself through every period of life, rendering society tiresome, pleasure insipid, and life itself a cruel bitter." "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Believe in the full, free, perfect, and sure salvation of a world, and thou shalt be saved—saved from those doubts and fears, that now "waste your faith and nourish your despair." Ye have need to learn that God is unchangably "good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all the works of his hands"—that he has linked the eternal glory of his creatures fast to his own throne, by the strong and indissoluble chain of his love, and that no power in heaven or on earth, in time, or eternity, can pluck us out of his hands. Learn this, I pray you, and your joys shall be abundant, and ye will tell me, as every man who believes will tell me, that faith has made you happier. It has dispelled the clouds of darkness that brooded over the future, and raised you up to better prospects and more glorious hopes. But I observe that faith in the doctrine of universal salvation will not only make you happier, but,

II. It will make you *better*.

I am not among the number of those who contend *that it is* no matter what a man believes; for I am sure

that faith exercises a most powerful influence upon the character and the conduct of man. The great part of that which we are in the habit of considering as our stock of knowledge, is no more nor less than faith; and there are comparatively but few of the acts of our lives, that proceed from what we *positively know*. "We walk by faith, and not by sight," is no less a truth of experience than of scripture. Let a man look upon the Mohammedan, ready at all times to raise a sword in an indiscriminate slaughter of all that do not bow down at the altar of the Arabian prophet, and let him tell me, if he can, what but faith is it that makes the difference between that man and the Christian? And I greatly err, if a view of the matter in this light does not oblige him to confess, that there is some little consequence attached to the great question, what a man shall, and what he shall not believe. Among the different sects of Christians, separated as they are by minor points, the difference may not be so great, as between the Christian and the Mohammedan faith. But that there is a difference in the moral influence of different systems among Christians, there can be no doubt.

You have, many of you, been in the habit of supposing that Universalism had no requirements to ask of its believers, and that its moral influence must be decidedly bad, and you may be surprised to hear me advocate its claims as an instrument of moral reform. But so it must be. I distinctly claim for the doctrine of universal grace, not only an *equal* share of moral power with other systems; but I claim for it a *purer, higher* and holier moral influence, than can be exerted by any other system; and I give it you, as the deliberate conviction of my judgement, that there is no man among you who *would not be* made *better* by faith in that doctrine, and

a life corresponding with its requirements. And now for the reasons which induce me to hold this opinion.

I might indeed insist upon this, as a legitimate conclusion from my previous position, that it will make men happier, for I hold it as an incontrovertible truth, that you cannot make a man happier without at the same time making him better. Happiness is our being's end and aim, and it is in pursuit of this, that we perform every act of our lives. It is a want of this that leads men into sin. It is a restless, uneasy and unsatisfied spirit, that goads men on and urges them to the commission of all those foul deeds that disgrace humanity, and I risk nothing in saying, that no man ever yet committed a crime when he was calm, contented, satisfied and happy. In proportion, therefore, as *any* doctrine is calculated to satisfy our desires for happiness, will it exert a salutary moral influence.

If therefore, the doctrine of Universal Grace, is, as I have shown, better calculated to make men calmly and peacefully happy, than any other system, it follows as a legitimate conclusion, that it will exert the most powerful and salutary moral influence. But I will not insist on this argument for there are an abundance of evidences in favor of our position without it.

I. It presents the only salutary doctrine of punishment.

There is no greater error than the supposition, that man's respect and reverence for law, is increased by adding to the amount of the penalty. In fact the very reverse of this proposition comes much nearer the truth than the proposition itself. The whole history of the world will bear witness, that in all ages, and in all countries, those laws have been most respected and best obeyed, whose penalties have been most mild and merciful. But when tyrants have ruled with a rod of iron,

and sought to enforce obedience to their laws, by means of most severe and unmerciful punishments, then the weak and timid have despaired, and the stout-hearted have despised them, and transgression has abounded. Now the common doctrine of punishment annexes to the law of God a most unmerciful penalty; it makes God punish men eternally, and of course without any design to do them the least possible good. With such views the feeble in mind despair, and contract a morbid insensibility to danger, and the strong in spirit brave it out, despising not only the law, but also the lawgiver. They look upon God as a hard master, who rules with a despotic sway—upon his law as a grevious burden—upon themselves as slaves, who have no further interest in obedience, than an escape from the merciless wrath of a despotic lawgiver.

On the other hand, Universalism makes punishment mild and merciful—the law itself holy and good—man a child, and the penalty of the law, the wise and salutary chastisement of a kind friend, who seeks by it to turn our wandering feet from the way of destruction and misery, to the path of virtue, where alone we can be happy. Now I say that in order for punishment to be effectual, its justice must be seen, and its goodness appreciated. Any other view of punishment though it may make *slaves* and hypocrites, can never produce that cheerful and spontaneous obedience which flows from a willing heart. I say, therefore, that Universalism is calculated to exert a higher and purer moral influence than any other system, because it appeals to the hearts, rather than the fears of men.

But again. Punishment in order to be effectual, must be *speedy* and *certain*. In both these respects, our views of *punishment* have a decided advantage over all other

systems. The common doctrines of the day, do indeed threaten a most tremendously severe punishment, but they nullify its influence by placing it far in the future, for their language is like that of the false prophets of Israel, "He prophesies of the things that are afar off, and the vision that he seeth is for many days to come." But to cap the climax, and as if on purpose to palliate all fear, and destroy entirely the influence of punishment, they offer to the vilest sinner, an easy method of escaping from that punishment, which is, in the first place, removed to the dim distance of future years, far beyond the reach of mortal vision.

Should our legislature pass a law, that the man who was guilty of theft should be punished with death at the stake, *thirty years* from the time of transgression, you would at once say, that although the punishment was severe, yet it could have no effect, for the reason that it was too far off. But should they add a clause, providing that at any time during the thirty years, the thief shall have the privilege of repenting, and if he does so, the punishment shall not be inflicted at all, you would *laugh* them to scorn. And yet this is a faithful and true, though *faint* representation of the common notion of the law of God and its penalty. He has given to man a law, and annexed to that law a penalty, inconceivably lasting and severe. But when we ask is it to be inflicted? The answer is, not while man shall live in this world. It is reserved to another state of existence, and is placed behind that curtain which separates time from eternity. And will it *certainly* be inflicted upon every man that violates the law? Oh! no, for the most hardened offender can at any time, during this life *repent*, and in one *brief hour* he shall be placed out of *all danger* from the penalty of the law. Thus do these

doctrines perpetually cry, in the language of the serpent, "*Ye shall not surely die.*" Ye *may* sin, and ye shall have your whole lives given you to perform a work which can be done in an hour, and when done, shall give you a clear escape from the penalty of the law.

On the other hand, Universalism teaches that the penalty of the law, though mild and merciful, is speedy and sure. Her language is, "In *the day* that thou eatest of the fruit of sin, thou shalt surely die," and there is *no escape*, for "he that doeth wrong *shall receive* for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." Ye may flatter yourselves that punishment is far away, and with a hope of an easy escape, but it is an idle dream. It is *nigh* thee, even at thy doors, and will most surely come upon thee. These are the doctrines of Universalism upon the subject of punishment, and it is evident, at a glance, that they are capable of exercising a far more powerfully restraining influence than any other system can boast.

II. Universalism presents the character of God in such a light that it will draw out the affections of the believer's heart in love to him, and good will to his children.

Love to God, and good will to man, lie at the foundation of all true morality. On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets. That system, therefore, is best calculated to exercise a salutary, moral influence, which can best secure obedience to these two requirements. Now, I say, that the best possible way to make a man love God, is, to stamp on his mind the conviction, that God is his friend and his father. You may draw a picture of the great divinity, clothed in vengeance as with a garment, and roll over the head of the sinner the tremendous thunders of eternal wrath, to the *end of his days*, and though you may thus make him

*tremble* like a slave, you cannot make him *love* like a *child*. But tell a man that God is good; stamp on his mind the full conviction, that in heaven there is one who is better than all, whose kindness knows no bounds, and whose faithfulness will never leave nor forsake the souls that he has made; and then you touch the heart and draw out the soul in love to him, as a being infinitely worthy of the warmest devotions of the mind. This is what Universalism teaches, and hence I say, that before all systems, and *above* all systems, it is most powerful in its influence to secure love to God.

Love to our *neighbor* is the next in the catalogue of moral virtues. How shall that be secured? Not by convincing a man that his neighbor is a mass of total depravity, hated of God, and destined to be fuel for hell fire, and fit only for a companion of devils. Such views as these can never go one step toward making a man love his neighbor. But convince a man that his neighbor is his brother, a child of the same God, and an heir of the same immortal and incorruptible inheritance, and when that truth is fixed in the mind, he will love him, as one to whom he is bound by a common interest, common origin, and common destiny. This is what Universalism teaches. It tells a man to recognise in all around him, the children of the same God, and the heirs of the same inheritance as himself, and calls on him to love them with the whole heart. Its moral influence then must be good, for it will produce love to God and good will to man; and as for all other moral duties, they are but the streams that flow from this fountain. Keep the fountain full, and the streams will not fail to flow continually.

I am frequently questioned upon the subject of the *requirements* of Universalism. If that be true, what has

man to do? is the question. I answer, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." *That is all.* If you love God, you will serve him, and if you love your neighbour, you will do him good and not evil.

There are many other views that I might take of the subject, all tending to establish the truth of the position I have assumed. But I am admonished that it is time to bring this discourse to a close. I can prove, with the clearness of light, in *theory*, that, upon all the known principles and laws of the human mind, Universalism is superior to any other system in its moral tendency. But after all, it is better to do so practically. Let us live the doctrine we profess, and we shall demonstrate the fact, beyond all controversy. Bigotry may resist the force of evidence, and sophistry may evade the most cogent reasoning; but there is a silent power in virtue, that nothing can withstand.

Again, then, I say, let those who profess to believe, *live* as their faith dictates; and though a silent, yet will it be a more powerful argument, in favor of the moral power of the doctrine, than I could put together, even though I could come to you with the zeal of a Paul, and the eloquence of an Apollos!

## SERMON XV.

### DECISION OF CHARACTER A RELIGIOUS DUTY.

"How long halt ye, between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. 1 Kings xviii. 21.

The Scriptures enjoin upon men the utmost frankness, honesty and decision of character. Hypocrisy, whether it proceed from irresolution, motives of policy, or dishonesty of mind, finds no excuse in the teachings of the sacred volume. It is taken for granted, that the subject of religion is of sufficient importance, to give it a claim upon the attention of every man. And for this reason the Bible appeals to all men, everywhere, to make up their minds upon the subject, and to act according to the teachings of the judgement, and the admonitions of conscience, in all honesty and sincerity before God and man. We are not however required to rush blindly into this matter, as the horse rusheth into the battle, but we are first to prove all things, and having proved them, to hold fast that which is good. So thought Elijah in the text, and the circumstances with which it stands connected. The people worshipped an idol called Baal, and when they had gathered together, he proposed to give them a test of the respective merits of Baal and the God of Israel. And when he should have placed before them the means of forming a correct opinion, he exhorts them to make no delay, but to choose for themselves, once and

for ever, whom they would follow. I have no time to spend upon these circumstances, and that work may be unnecessary, as I presume you have already anticipated the use I intend to make of the exhortation of the text.

This is the last of the series of lectures in which I have been for some time past engaged. I have endeavored to set before you the difference between our faith, and the popular creeds of the day, as well as the reasons we render for our opinions. I have labored, to the best of my feeble abilities, to put you in possession of the means of judging between ours, and the prevailing views of the character of God, and the economy of his grace. In the present discourse I would persuade you, if I could, to come to a definite conclusion in the case, and having decided, to act as honesty and duty shall dictate, without fear or favor.

I have no disposition to conceal the fact, that there is a wide and irreconcilable difference between us and our opposers, nor can it be denied that if we are right, they are wrong, not merely in some small points, but radically and I had almost said totally wrong. This is a truth with which we are well acquainted, and that man pursues a mistaken policy, nay, even a wicked course of hypocrisy, who attempts to conceal this fact. There is no manner of use in endeavouring to make it appear, that there is but a shade of difference between us and other denominations, for there is a difference, high as heaven, wide as the earth; a difference as hopelessly and utterly irreconcilable as light and darkness, and there is no disguising the obvious truth, that if one system is true the other is false, desperately and hopelessly false, I had almost said, in its whole length and breadth.

I make these remarks because, in my judgement, they *have an important* bearing upon our duty in the case.

If there was but a slight shade of difference between us, then it would be of little consequence which we should choose, or indeed whether we made any choice at all. Had Baal and the God of Israel been so very near alike, that one could scarcely tell the difference between the two, we should never have heard Elijah calling upon the people, with such earnestness as he evidently manifests in the text, to choose whom they would serve. But the prophet felt that there was a wide, and an irreconcilable difference between the two. He knew if the Lord was God, Baal was a dumb idol, and his worship the grossest idolatry, and that it was impossible for the people innocently to worship both God and Baal, and for this reason he called on them to make their election, and having made it, to act as honesty and sincerity should dictate. So in this case, there is a difference between Universalism and Partialism, so wide that they cannot both be true. A man can no more be a Universalist and a Partialist, than he could serve both God and Baal. Every man must be either a Partialist or a Universalist, for he cannot be both, at one and the same time. I go even farther, and say that no man can innocently believe the one, and yet support the other. For this reason then, if for no other, it becomes your duty, first to examine, and then to choose between them, and act accordingly. I do not mean that a man is bound to become a flaming bigot, to "damn all parties but his own," and to deny all the common courtesies and civilities of life, to those who do not see with his eyes. But I would be understood to say distinctly, that every man is bound to act, in these matters with a strict and conscientious regard to principle. If he believes the Lord to be God, he ought to worship and serve him, and he cannot innocently build the temples of Baal, or bow at

his altars. To speak without a figure, if a man is fully convinced in his own judgement that Universalism is true, he is bound in all honesty to say so, and to pursue a corresponding course of conduct, and he cannot advocate or support any of the partial systems of the day, without incurring the just charge of hypocrisy, because the doctrines are so different that they cannot be mistaken, the one for the other.

These are positions that few would attempt to controvert in theory, and yet there are multitudes, who practically deny them every day of their lives. There are men who live to old age caring for none of these things, never having made them a subject of reflection or examination. There are others so bigoted in favor of Baal, that they will not examine to see whether God has any claims upon them or not. Still again there are others, (and their name is legion, for they are many) who, though convinced that Universalism is true, as far as they are convinced of any thing, yet through fear of reproach, love of gain, popularity, or some other unholy motive, turn their backs upon what they believe, and support that which their own judgements condemn as utterly false. To all these classes I appeal in this discourse, and I urge it upon them, that they be either one thing or the other. Either condemn Universalism entirely, or act as if you believed it. "If the Lord be God follow him; if Baal then follow him."

I will now proceed to lay before you some considerations that urge to the performance of this duty.

I. The importance of the questions at issue, demand it at our hands.

Were it a mere matter of idle curiosity, that could have no influence upon our conduct or happiness, or upon *the interests of* our fellow men, then might we be ex-

cused from engaging in it at all. But such is not the fact. The subjects involved in the controversy between Universalists and others, are of vast and incalculable importance; they enter into men's business and bosoms, and exercise a commanding and controlling interest, upon human happiness and public morals. So long as man is a frail and dependent being, living upon the bounty of God, and depending upon him at all times for life and happiness, it can never be a matter of small moment, whether God is a tyrant, who creates but to curse, or a friend whose immutable purpose it is to deliver, protect and bless. Nor is the fate of man in the future world of small consequence. As an individual, I have a deep and abiding interest in the question, whether I am to live beyond the grave? And if so, whether I am to rise to a purer and happier state, or sink down *to the realms* of inconceivable and endless torment. And when I look around me upon my children, and feel that my own weal or wo, is indissolubly connected with theirs, I cannot deem it a matter of no importance, whether these dear objects of my affections, are destined in the counsels of God to unite their voices in the deathless song of joy on high, or to lift up their cries, in the wailings and contortions of never ending despair. In like manner, when I look around me upon my friends and neighbours, and feel that I am bound to love them, even as myself, I cannot persuade myself, that I ought to be indifferent to a question that involves their immortal happiness or misery. And when I send abroad my imagination to the ends of the earth, with all its thronging myriads of human beings, and remember that they are all bound to me by a common origin and a common brotherhood, I feel that I am interested in knowing their destiny, and I ought *not to* pass by with indifference the question, whether

they are to be saved or damned. Just in proportion to the importance of these subjects, therefore, is my obligation to examine them with care; and having examined, to choose between them, and having chosen, to act accordingly. It is a question of endless joy, or ceaseless wo; and that, too, for unnumbered and unborn millions of my kindred, my dearest friends, my own children, my companion and myself; and I ought not to halt between two opinions, or rest satisfied without having come to a firm and an unshaken conclusion.

II. The interests of community at large require us to perform the duty enjoined in the text.

This is true both in regard to the morals and the happiness of community. This world is at best but a state of alternate sunshine and storm, and we may not expect to pass through life without suffering some of its ills. To sustain us under these trials, we need the hopes and the consolations of the Gospel. But such is the general and dreadful apostacy from the faith of the great Redeemer, that the very Gospel which was given us as a source of richest enjoyment, is changed to a fountain of bitterness, and is made one of the most fruitful sources of misery. The sectarian dogmas of the day go into all the ramifications of society, and wherever they go, they cause many a sigh, and many a tear. The father looks upon his sons, and the mother upon her blooming daughters, and their bosoms heave with anguish, as they reflect that these objects of their affections are out of the ark of safety, and may become the sport of fiends, and the companions of devils, in the regions of perpetual torment. Friend looks upon friend, and weeps at the thought that they must part, and that while one shall rejoice in heaven, the other must weep in hell. Parents *mourn over their* children that are torn from their em-

brace by death, not so much because they are dead, as because they fear, awfully fear, that they are in hell. Widows and orphans, go to the grave of a husband and a father, and they mourn that their friend and protector is dead. But more terrible than death itself, is the dreadful thought that he to whom they were bound by ten thousand ties of love, may now be lifting up his eyes in the hopeless agonies of the infernal pit. They wept before; but this fills the cup of sorrow with its bitterest dregs, and calls out the deepest moan of affliction. Thus it is, all abroad, around you, through all the length and breadth of the land; in every city, in every street, in every village, in every hamlet, in every dwelling, there are minds disturbed, hearts lacerated and bleeding, souls haunted with spectres of endless wo, which come in the daylight, and in the darkness of night, and poison every cup of enjoyment.

This is no idle fiction, no empty declamation, but it has its foundation in sober fact, and that you may better appreciate its truth, I will make the application to your own city. The past has been a cold and dreary winter of suffering. Shivering limbs, and hungry children have been around us, and called for charity. It has also been a season of most extraordinary religious excitement. Churches have been thronged from the dawn of morning to the dark hour of midnight, and all that mighty minds and commanding eloquence could do has been done to excite the public mind, and alarm the fears of the people. The public mind *has been* excited, and the most dreadful fears have been aroused. And now, which think you, has produced most unhappiness in this city, during the last four months, poverty and want—or religious excitement? Could you but lift the veil from *the public* mind, and follow the multitude from the

scene of excitement to their homes; could you know their musings upon the way, their dread forebodings in the family circle, their painful meditations upon the bed in the silence of night, the wretched anxieties of parents for their children, of children for their parents, of all for themselves; the sombre musings of those who by a law of the human mind, are precipitated from the pinnacle of hope to the valley of despair: from the fire of overheated excitement, to the frost and cold of utter indifference; could you see all this, as it exists in reality around you, I doubt not you would agree with me in the opinion, that the actual misery caused by poverty and bodily distress, severe as it has been, has nevertheless been light and small, when compared with that which has proceeded from mental anxieties, caused by a false and spurious theology. *This* has opened the deepest fountains of human wo, and called out more sighs and tears than all the frosts and snows of a cold and blustering winter, and all the pains of stern necessity and want.

I say then, that the happiness of community at large, calls upon every man who desires the felicity of his fellow-creatures around him, not to halt between two opinions, but to choose whom he will serve; and having made his choice, to lend his aid and influence in staying the desolating march of error, and in rolling back that deep tide of misery, that now flows over the land, and darkens all the face of human society. I tell you that the doctrines of the Gospel of impartial grace, afford the only antidote to these evils. The power of infidelity has been tried, and has failed. Indifference and skepticism are but a poor shield against these enemies of our peace. It is a fixed and settled faith in the God and Saviour of all, and that alone, that can check the rising fear, dispel the *gloomy doubt*, hush the anxious thought, and yield con-

tinual peace. In the midst of all this wild uproar and confusion—this commotion of the elements, and this unsettling of the usual foundations of confidence in God and his gracious care—this triumph of fear when the public mind, unmoored from its fastenings, has been driven at the mercy of the furious winds of fanaticism, how has it fared with the steadfast believer in God's boundless grace, and in the ultimate felicity of a world? Why, he has stood firmly upon a rock that could not be moved. Calm and tranquil as the bosom of the placid waters, sleeping in sunlight, and undisturbed by the winds, has been his mind. No anxious fears, no doubts of gloomy aspect, no dread forebodings of hopeless wo, have disturbed his noonday walks, or his midnight slumbers. When all around him has been a scene of mental anxiety, and despair has stalked abroad with a wild and haggard look, he has been at peace. He has looked up to God. There all his hopes have centered; and though storms and tempests have been around him, he has feared no evil; for he knoweth that the rod and the staff of the Almighty, shall support and guide him, and with him, all his fearful, doubting fellows, safely to the haven of rest. I call on you, then, as the friends of human happiness, to choose this day whom ye will serve. "If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

But the public morals are concerned in this matter. I have more than once said, that love to God, and good will to man, lie at the foundation of all true morality, and I have shown that faith in God, as an impartial friend and Saviour, and a belief that man, universally, is our brother, is far better calculated to make men love God and one another, than any other faith. With *these views*, it will appear that the whole system of

effort for moral reform, is wrong and powerless. It all rests upon the position, that man is to be governed by his fears, and driven to duty, as the trembling slave with the lash. For ages men have sought to drive their fellows to virtue with the war-club of damnation, rather than to entice them with the olive-branch of peace. But after all, sin abounds more and more. The principle has been long and faithfully tried, and its inefficiency is written upon the face of society, and upon the history of the world.

I appeal to you, if it is not time that something else were adopted, even if it be for nothing else than an experiment. Long has man been driven with the lash of fear; it is high time to try the constraining influence of love and mercy. Long has man been treated as a slave; it is time to begin to treat him as a child, and win him to virtue by the tenderness of a father's kindness. Long, too long, have the teachers in Israel sought to drive human nature out of man, by some sudden and mysterious change, and too plainly is the fact written out upon the face of society, that the attempt has failed, utterly failed, and that maugre all the "new hearts" that men get, human nature will be human nature after all, and the new heart is not unfrequently as bad, or perhaps worse, than the old one. It is time for the moralist to cease his war upon human nature, and instead of labouring to pluck up the tree let him seek to prune it, and train and cultivate its branches, that it may grow up in fair proportions, and flourish in its beauty, and bring forth abundantly the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Bigotry and all uncharitableness, abound in the land. Strife and contention are rife around us, and so it will be as long as that worst of all aristocracies, a religious aristocracy, exists, and lifts the few above the many, by

allowing them to claim a monopoly of the blessings of God, and of heaven itself. The moral wants of man call for a system that shall level all the proud distinctions of earth, and break down the separating walls of partition, that have so long and so injuriously separated man from his fellow man. Such a system is Universalism. It seeks to lead men rather than drive them with the lash. It wars not with nature, but seeks to improve and direct its course, and rear it up to its perfection. It teaches that God is our Father, and man everywhere our brother—places all on one common level—promises all one common inheritance, and asks us to love God and serve him, by being kind to his creatures, and *our* brethren. Thus it curbs the head long passions, breaks down the pride of the haughty, and infuses into the heart that love which shows itself in works of kindness, justice, mercy, charity and benevolence.

But there is another view to be taken of this subject. The present is emphatically an age of excitement. The heaving elements of mind are in commotion around us. There is excitement in the political waters. There is excitement in the monetary system. There is excitement in the literary world; and look where you will, excitement is there. I need not speculate upon the cause. It may be but the natural effect of the recent liberation of the human mind from the chains and fetters which had bound it for ages. As the eagle, long imprisoned, when let loose from his cage, will soar aloft to wet his wings in the clouds of heaven, and gaze upon the full orbed glories of the sun—now scaling the lofty mountain's top, and now darting with incredible velocity down its rugged sides. So the human mind, long cramped and fettered, is liberated, and it is stretched to its ut*most tension*, and riots in all the luxury of its newly

discovered liberty. Whether this be the cause or not, the fact is certain, and blind must be the mind that can look abroad, and not discover a morbid spirit of excitability which pushes to every extreme, and threatens to end in anarchy and confusion. I appeal to you, if there is not need of some voice, that shall speak to the elements, as the Saviour once spoke to the boisterous waves, saying, "Peace! be still!" that a holy and heavenly calm may ensue. And if so, I ask, where can that voice be found? Is it in the popular systems of the day? Alas! they also live in the atmosphere of excitement, and flourish only there. Their advocates have seized upon this very feature of the age, to urge on their sectarian schemes. Religion, too, has become a matter of excitement. Instead of restraining the passions, and the workings of this spirit of excitability, it is made to live in excitement, and to feed that very morbid appetite, that it ought to deny.

Universalism seeks to check the workings of this spirit of evil. It appeals not to the passions, but to the understanding. It asks men to examine with calmness, to decide with candor and deliberation, and to act with prudence, firmness, and circumspection. It seeks to make men calm, consistent, and reasonable. And I ask, is there not need of some influence to counteract that wild spirit of excitement, which marks the character of the age, and runs riot in every department of society? If so, then "how long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal, then follow him."

But, alas! men who profess to believe in God, and to reject the claims of Baal, have a thousand excuses and apologies, for neglecting to manifest their faith by their *works.*

This man is a merchant, and he knows, that a profession of the popular dogmas of the day, will secure him custom, so he bows down at the shrine of Baal, though he believes him to be no more than an idol. *That* man is a Physician, and he knows that a profession of faith will get him patients, so he professes with his mouth, what he does not believe in his heart. Another man is a politician, and he wants votes. He thinks, if he speaks what he thinks, it may injure him, and so he becomes all things to all men, and will bow at the altars of God or Baal, as happens to be most convenient. Another man, still, says he has a great show of charity. He believes indeed in Universalism, but he is no bigot, and in the excess of his charity, he *forgets* to be honest. He gives his means and his influence, to support doctrines which he says he knows to be false. He says he believes in Universalism, and yet from week to week, and from sabbath to sabbath, he sits under the preaching of the man who denounces Universalism, as the vilest of heresies, and gives all his influence against it, because he is no bigot, and he wishes to be charitable!! He may be no bigot, but he certainly is not far from a hypocrite. In the political world, if a man should profess to agree with one party, and yet do all he could to advance the interests of the other, he would be scouted from both. And yet in religion, men will fawn around the painted hypocrite of this sort, and urge him to go to this church or that, well knowing that the man is belying his conscience, and therefore sinning against God. But I cannot dwell longer.

I take this occasion to express my satisfaction to this large assembly, for that patient attention with which they have listened to this protracted discussion. And I *call on you* as honest men and women, as fathers and

mothers, as citizens and friends, "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve. If the Lord be God, then follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Amen and Amen.

THE END.

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